﻿The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Christian, by Hall Caine

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with

almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or

re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included

with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Christian

A Story

Author: Hall Caine

Release Date: July, 2005 [EBook #8407]

This file was first posted on July 8, 2003

Last Updated: March 8, 2018

Language: English

Character set encoding: UTF-8

\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CHRISTIAN \*\*\*

Produced by Charles Aldarondo, Tiffany Vergon, Thomas

Berger, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

THE CHRISTIAN

\_A STORY\_

By Hall Caine

\_Author of The Manxman\_

\* \* \* \* \*

\_The period of the story is the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

No particular years are intended. The time occupied by the incidents of

the first Book is about six months, of the Second Book about six months,

of the Third Book about six months; then there is an interval of half a

year, and the time occupied by the incidents of the Fourth Book is about

six weeks. An Author's Note will be found at the end.\_

\* \* \* \* \*

THE CHRISTIAN.

FIRST BOOK.

\_THE OUTER WORLD\_.

I.

On the morning of the 9th of May, 18--, three persons important to

this story stood among the passengers on the deck of the Isle of Man

steamship \_Tynwald\_ as she lay by the pier at Douglas getting up steam

for the passage to Liverpool. One of these was an old clergyman of

seventy, with a sweet, mellow, childlike face; another was a young man

of thirty, also a clergyman; the third was a girl of twenty. The older

clergyman wore a white neckcloth about his throat, and was dressed in

rather threadbare black of a cut that had been more common twenty years

before; the younger clergyman wore a Roman collar, a long clerical

coat, and a stiff, broad-brimmed hat with a cord and tassel. They stood

amidships, and the captain, coming out of his room to mount the bridge,

saluted them as he passed.

“Good morning, Mr. Storm.”

The young clergyman returned the salutation with a slight bow and the

lifting of his hat.

“Morning to you, Parson Quayle.”

The old clergyman answered cheerily, “Oh, good morning, captain; good

morning.”

There was the usual inquiry about the weather outside, and drawing up to

answer it, the captain came eye to eye with the girl.

“So this is the granddaughter, is it?”

“Yes, this is Glory,” said Parson Quayle. “She's leaving the old

grandfather at last, captain, and I'm over from Peel to set her off, you

see.”

“Well, the young lady has got the world before her--at her feet, I

ought to say.--You're looking as bright and fresh as the morning, Miss

Quayle.”

The captain carried off his compliment with a breezy laugh, and went

along to the bridge. The girl had heard him only in a momentary flash

of consciousness, and she replied merely with a side glance and a smile.

Both eyes and ears, and every sense and every faculty, seemed occupied

with the scene before her.

It was a beautiful spring morning, not yet nine o'clock, but the sun

stood high over Douglas Head, and the sunlight was glancing in the

harbour from the little waves of the flowing tide. Oars were rattling up

the pier, passengers were trooping down the gangways, and the decks fore

and aft were becoming thronged.

“It's beautiful!” she was saying, not so much to her companions as to

herself, and the old parson was laughing at her bursts of rapture over

the commonplace scene, and dropping out in reply little driblets of

simple talk--sweet, pure nothings--the innocent babble as of a mountain

stream.

She was taller than the common, and had golden-red hair, and magnificent

dark-gray eyes of great size. One of her eyes had a brown spot, which

gave at the first glance the effect of a squint, at the next glance a

coquettish expression, and ever after a sense of tremendous power

and passion. But her most noticeable feature was her mouth, which was

somewhat too large for beauty, and was always moving nervously. When she

spoke, her voice startled you with its depth, which was a kind of soft

hoarseness, but capable of every shade of colour. There was a playful

and impetuous raillery in nearly all she said, and everything seemed

to be expressed by mind and body at the same time. She moved her body

restlessly, and while standing in the same place her feet were always

shuffling. Her dress was homely--almost poor--and perhaps a little

careless. She appeared to smile and laugh continually, and yet there

were tears in her eyes sometimes.

The young clergyman was of a good average height, but he looked taller

from a certain distinction of figure. When he raised his hat at the

captain's greeting he showed a forehead like an arched wall, and a

large, close-cropped head. He had a well-formed nose, a powerful chin,

and full lips--all very strong and set for one so young. His complexion

was dark--almost swarthy--and there was a certain look of the gipsy in

his big golden-brown eyes with their long black lashes. He was clean

shaven, and the lower part of his face seemed heavy under the splendid

fire of the eyes above it. His manner had a sort of diffident restraint;

he stood on the same spot without moving, and almost without raising his

drooping head; his speech was grave and usually slow and laboured; his

voice was bold and full.

The second bell had rung, and the old parson was making ready to go

ashore.

“You'll take care of this runaway, Mr. Storm, and deliver her safely at

the door of the hospital?”

“I will.”

“And you'll keep an eye on her in that big Babylon over there?”

“If she'll let me, sir.”

“Yes, indeed, yes; I know she's as unstable as water and as hard to hold

as a puff of wind.”

The girl was laughing again. “You might as well call me a tempest

and have done with it, or,” with a glance at the younger man, “say a

storm--Glory St---- Oh!”

With a little catch of the breath she arrested the name before it

was uttered by her impetuous tongue, and laughed again to cover her

confusion. The young man smiled faintly and rather painfully, but the

old parson was conscious of nothing.

“Well, and why not? A good name for you too, and you richly deserve

it.--But the Lord is lenient with such natures, John. He never tries

them beyond their strength. She hasn't much leaning to religion, you

know.”

The girl recalled herself from the busy scene around and broke in again

with a tone of humour and pathos mixed.

“There, call me an infidel at once, grandfather. I know what you mean.

But just to show you that I haven't exactly registered a vow in heaven

never to go to church in London because you've given me such a dose of

it in the Isle of Man, I'll promise to send you a full and particular

report of Mr. Storm's first sermon. Isn't that charming of me?”

The third bell was ringing, the blast of the steam whistle was echoing

across the bay, and the steamer was only waiting for the mails. Taking a

step nearer to the gangway, the old parson talked faster.

“Did Aunt Anna give you money enough, child?”

“Enough for my boat fare and my train.”

“No more! Now Anna is so----”

“Don't trouble, grandfather. Woman wants but little here below--Aunt

Anna excepted. And then a hospital nurse----”

“I'm afraid you'll feel lonely in that great wilderness.”

“Lonely with five millions of neighbours?”

“You'll be longing for the old island, Glory, and I half repent me

already----”

“If ever I have the blue-devils, grandpa, I'll just whip on my cape and

fly home again.”

“To-morrow morning I'll be searching all over the house for my runaway.”

Glory tried to laugh gaily. “Upstairs, downstairs, and in my lady's

chamber.”

“'Glory,' I'll be crying, 'Where's the girl gone at all? I haven't heard

her voice in the house to-day. What's come over the old place to strike

it so dead?'”

The girl's eyes were running over, but in a tone of gentle raillery and

heart's love she said severely: “Nonsense, grandfather, you'll forget

all about Glory going to London before the day after to-morrow. Every

morning you'll be making rubbings of your old runes, and every night

you'll be playing chess with Aunt Rachel, and every Sunday you'll be

scolding old Neilus for falling asleep in the reading desk, and--and

everything will go on just the same as ever.”

The mails had come aboard, one of the gangways had been drawn ashore,

and the old parson, holding his big watch in his left hand, was diving

into his fob-pocket with the fingers of the right.

“Here”--panting audibly, as if he had been running hard--“is your

mother's little pearl ring.”

The girl drew off her slack, soiled glove and took the ring in her

nervous fingers.

“A wonderful talisman is the relic of a good mother, sir,” said the old

parson.

The young clergyman bent his head.

“You're like Glory herself in that though--you don't remember your

mother either.”

“No-no.”

“I'll keep in touch with your father, John, trust me for that. You and

he shall be good friends yet. A man can't hold out against his son for

nothing worse than choosing the Church against the world. The old man

didn't mean all he said; and then it isn't the thunder that strikes

people dead, you know. So leave him to me; and if that foolish old

Chalse hasn't been putting notions into his head----”

The throbbing in the steam funnel had ceased and in the sudden hush a

voice from the bridge cried, “All ashore!”

“Good-bye, Glory! Good-bye, John! Good-bye both!”

“Good-bye, sir,” said the young clergyman with a long hand-clasp.

But the girl's arms were about the old man's neck. “Good-bye, you dear

old grandpa, and I'm ashamed I--I'm sorry I--I mean it's a shame of me

to--good-bye!”

“Good-bye, my wandering gipsy, my witch, my runaway!”

“If you call me names I'll have to stop your mouth, sir.

Again--another----”

A voice cried, “Stand back there!”

The young clergyman drew the girl back from the bulwarks, and the

steamer moved slowly away.

“I'll go below--no, I won't; I'll stay on deck. I'll go ashore--I can't

bear it; it's not too late yet. No, I'll go to the stern and see the

water in the wake.”

The pier was cleared and the harbour was empty. Over the white churning

water the sea gulls were wheeling, and Douglas Head was gliding slowly

back. Down the long line of the quay the friends of the passengers were

waving adieus.

“There he is, on the end of the pier! That's grandpa waving his

handkerchief! Don't you see it? The red-and-white cotton one! God bless

him! How \_wae\_ his little present made me! He has been keeping it all

these years. But my silk handkerchief is too damp--it won't float at

all. Will you lend me----Ah, thank you! Good-bye! good-bye! good----”

The girl hung over the stern rail, leaning her breast upon it and waving

the handkerchief as long as the pier and its people were in sight, and

when they were gone from recognition she watched the line of the land

until it began to fade into the clouds, and there was no more to be seen

of what she had looked upon every day of her life until to-day.

“The dear little island! I never thought it was so beautiful! Perhaps I

might have been happy even there, if I had tried. Now, if I had only had

somebody for company! How silly of me! I've been five years wishing and

praying to get away, and now! ... It \_is\_ lovely, though, isn't it? Just

like a bird on the water! And when you've been born in a place ... the

dear little island! And the old folks, too! How lonely they'll be, after

all! I wonder if I shall ever.... I'll go below. The wind's freshening,

and this water in the wake is making my eyes... Good-bye, little birdie!

I'll come back--I'll.... Yes, never fear, I'll----”

The laughter and impetuous talking, the gentle humour and pathos,

had broken at length into a sob, and the girl had wheeled about and

disappeared down the cabin stairs. John Storm stood looking after her.

He had hardly spoken, but his great brown eyes were moist.

II.

Her father had been the only son of Parson Quayle, and chaplain to the

bishop at Bishopscourt. It was there he had met her mother, who

was lady's maid to the bishop's wife. The maid was a bright young

Frenchwoman, daughter of a French actress, famous in her day, and of

an officer under the Empire, who had never been told of her existence.

Shortly after their marriage the chaplain was offered a big mission

station in Africa, and, being a devotee, he clutched at it without

fear of the fevers of the coast. But his young French wife was about to

become a mother, and she shrank from the perils of his life abroad, so

he took her to his father's house at Peel, and bade her farewell for

five years.

He lived four, and during that time they exchanged some letters. His

final instructions were sent from Southampton: “If it's a boy, call him

John (after the Evangelist); and if it's a girl, call her Glory.” At the

end of the first year she wrote: “I have shortened our darling, and you

never saw anything so lovely! Oh, the sweetness of her little bare arms,

and her neck, and her little round shoulders! You know she's red--I've

really got a red one--a curly red one! Such big beaming eyes, too! And

then her mouth, and her chin, and her tiny red toes! I don't know how

you can live without seeing her!” Near the end of the fourth year he

sent his last answer: “Dear Wife--This separation is bitter; but God has

willed it, and we must not forget that the probabilities are that we may

pass our lives apart.” The next letter was from the English consul on

the Gaboon River, announcing the death of the devoted missionary.

Parson Quayle's household consisted only of himself and two maiden

daughters, but that was too much for the lively young Frenchwoman. While

her husband lived, she suffocated under the old-maid \_régime\_; and when

he was gone she made no more fight with destiny, but took some simple

ailment, and died suddenly.

A bare hillside frowned down on the place where Glory was born; but the

sun rose over it, and a beautiful river hugged its sides. A quarter of

a mile down the river there was a harbour, and beyond the harbour a bay,

with the ruins of an old castle standing out on an islet rock, and then

the broad sweep of the Irish Sea-the last in those latitudes to “parley

with the setting sun.” The vicarage was called Glenfaba, and it was half

a mile outside the fishing town of Peel.

Glory was a little red-headed witch from the first, with an air of

general uncanniness in everything she did and said. Until after she

was six there was no believing a word she uttered. Her conversation was

bravely indifferent to considerations of truth or falsehood, fear or

favour, reward or punishment. The parson used to say, “I'm really afraid

the child has no moral conscience--she doesn't seem to know right from

wrong.” This troubled his religion, but it tickled his humour, and it

did not disturb his love. “She's a perfect pagan--God bless her innocent

heart!”

She had more than a child's genius for make-believe. In her hunger for

child company, before the days when she found it for herself, she made

believe that various versions of herself lived all over the place, and

she would call them out to play. There was Glory in the river, under the

pool where the perches swam, and Glory down the well, and Glory up in

the hills, and they answered when she spoke to them. All her dolls were

kings and queens, and she had a gift for making up in strange and grand

disguises. It was almost as if her actress grandmother had bestowed on

her from her birth the right to life and luxury and love.

She was a born mimic, and could hit off to a hair an eccentricity or an

affectation. The frown of Aunt Anna, who was severe, the smile of Aunt

Rachel, who was sentimental, and the yawn of Cornelius Kewley, the clerk

who was always sleepy, lived again in the roguish, rippling face. She

remembered some of her mother's French songs, and seeing a street-singer

one day, she established herself in the market-place in that character,

with grown people on their knees around her, ready to fall on her and

kiss her and call her Phonodoree, the fairy. But she did not forget to

go round for the ha'pennies either.

At ten she was a tomboy, and marched through the town at the head of an

army of boys, playing on a comb between her teeth and flying the vicar's

handkerchief at the end of his walking-stick. In these days she climbed

trees and robbed orchards (generally her own) and imitated boys' voices,

and thought it tyranny that she might not wear trousers. But she wore

a sailor's blue stocking-cap, and it brightened existence when, for

economy's sake and for the sake of general tidiness, she was allowed to

wear a white woollen jersey. Then somebody who had a dinghy that he did

not want asked her if she would like to have a boat. Would she like to

have paradise, or pastry cakes, or anything that was heavenly! After

that she wore a sailor's jacket and a sou'wester when she was on the

sea, and tumbled about the water like a duck.

At twelve she fell in love--with love. It was a vague passion interwoven

with dreams of grandeur. The parson being too poor to send her to the

girls' college at Douglas, and his daughters being too proud to send her

to the dame's school at Peel, she was taught at home by Aunt Rachel,

who read the poetry of Thomas Moore, knew the birthdays of all the royal

family, and was otherwise meekly romantic. From this source she gathered

much curious sentiment relating to some visionary world where young

girls were held aloft in the sunshine of luxury and love and happiness.

One day she was lying on her back on the heather of the Peel hill, with

her head on her arms, thinking of a story that Aunt Rachel had told her.

It was of a mermaid who had only to slip up out of the sea and say

to any man, “Come,” and he came--he left everything and followed her.

Suddenly the cold nose of a pointer rubbed against her forehead, a

strong voice cried, “Down, sir!” and a young man of two and twenty, in

leggings and a shooting-jacket, strode between her and the cliffs. She

knew him by sight. He was John Storm, the son of Lord Storm, who had

lately come to live in the mansion house at Knockaloe, a mile up the

hill from Glenfaba.

For three weeks thereafter she talked of nobody else, and even began to

comb her hair. She watched him in church, and told Aunt Rachel she was

sure he could see quite well in the dark, for his big eyes seemed to

have the light inside of them. After that she became ashamed, and if

anybody happened to mention his name in her hearing she flushed up to

the forehead and fled out of the room. He never once looked at her,

and after a while he went away to Canada. She set the clock on the back

landing to Canadian time, so that she might always know what he was

doing abroad, and then straightway forgot all about him. Her moods

followed each other rapidly, and were all of them overpowering and all

sincere, but it was not until a year afterward that she fell in love, in

the church vestry, with the pretty boy who stood opposite to her in the

catechism class.

He was an English boy of her own age, and he was only staying in the

island for his holidays. The second time she saw him it was in the

grounds at Glenfaba, while his mother was returning a call indoors. She

gave him a little tap on the arm and he had to run after her--down a

bank and up a tree, where she laughed and said. “Isn't it nice?” and he

could see nothing but her big white teeth.

His name was Francis Horatio Nelson Drake, and he was full of great

accounts of the goings-on in the outer world, where his school was, and

where lived the only “men” worth talking about. Of course he spoke of

all this familiarly and with a convincing reality which wrapped Glory in

the plumage of dreams. He was a wonderful being, altogether, and in due

time (about three days) she proposed to him. True, he did not jump at

her offer with quite proper alacrity, but when she mentioned that it

didn't matter to her in the least whether he wanted her or not, and that

plenty would be glad of the chance, he saw things differently, and

they agreed to elope. There was no particular reason for this drastic

measure, but as Glory had a boat, it seemed the right thing to do.

She dressed herself in all her Confirmation finery, and stole out to

meet him under the bridge where her boat lay moored. He kept her half an

hour waiting, having sisters and other disadvantages, but “once aboard

her lugger,” he was safe. She was breathless, and he was anxious, and

neither thought it necessary to waste any time in kissing.

They slipped down the harbour and out into the bay, and then ran up the

sail and stood off for Scotland. Being more easy in mind when this

was done, they had time to talk of the future. Francis Horatio was for

work--he was going to make a name for himself. Glory did not see it

quite in that light. A name, yes, and lots of triumphal processions, but

she was for travel--there were such lots of things people could see if

they didn't waste so much time working.

“What a girl you are!” he said derisively; whereupon she bit her lip,

for she didn't quite like it. But they were nearly half an hour

out before he spoiled himself utterly. He had brought his dog, a

she-terrier, and he began to call her by her kennel name and to say what

a fine little thing she was, and what a deal of money they would make

by her pups. That was too much for Glory. She couldn't think of eloping

with a person who used such low expressions.

“What a girl you are!” he said again; but she did not mind it in the

least. With a sweep of her bare arm she had put the tiller hard aport,

intending to tack back to Peel, but the wind had freshened and the sea

was rising, and by the swift leap of the boat the boom was snapped, and

the helpless sail came napping down upon the mast. Then they tumbled

into the trough, and Glory had not strength to pull them out of it, and

the boy was of no more use than a tripper. She was in her white muslin

dress, and he was nursing his dog, and the night was closing down on

them, and they were wobbling about under a pole and a tattered rag. But

all at once a great black yacht came heaving up in the darkness, and a

grown-up voice cried, “Trust yourself to me, dear.”

It was John Storm. He had already awakened the young girl in her, and

thereafter he awakened the young woman as well. She clung to him like a

child that night, and during the four years following she seemed always

to be doing the same. He was her big brother, her master, her lord, her

sovereign. She placed him on a dizzy height above her, amid a halo

of goodness and grandeur. If he smiled on her she flushed, and if he

frowned she fretted and was afraid. Thinking to please him, she tried to

dress herself up in all the colours of the rainbow, but he reproved her

and bade her return to her jersey. She struggled to comb out her red

curls until he told her that the highest ladies in the land would give

both ears for them, and then she fondled them in her fingers and admired

them in a glass.

He was a serious person, but she could make him laugh until he screamed.

Excepting Byron and “Sir Charles Grandison,” out of the vicar's library,

the only literature she knew was the Bible, the Catechism, and the

Church Service, and she used these in common talk with appalling freedom

and audacity. The favourite butt of her mimicry was the parish clerk

saying responses when he was sleepy.

The parson: “O Lord, open thou our lips” (no response). “Where are you,

Neilus?”

The clerk (awakening suddenly in the desk below): “Here I am, your

reverence--and our mouth shall show forth thy praise.”

When John Storm did laugh he laughed beyond all control, and then Glory

was entirely happy. But he went away again, his father having sent him

to Australia, and all the light of her world went out.

It was of no use bothering with the clock on the back landing, because

things were different by this time. She was sixteen, and the only tree

she climbed now was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that

tore her terribly. John Storm was the son of a lord, and he would be

Lord Something himself some day. Glory Quayle was an orphan, and her

grandfather was a poor country clergyman. Their poverty was sweet,

but there was gall in it, nevertheless. The little forced economies in

dress, the frocks that had to be turned, the bonnets that were beauties

when they were bought, but had to be worn until the changes of fashion

made them frights, and then the mysterious parcels of left-off clothing

from goodness knows where--how the independence of the girl's spirit

rebelled against such humiliations!

The blood of her mother was beginning to boil over, and the old-maid

\_régime\_, which had crushed the life out of the Frenchwoman, was

suffocating the Manx girl with its formalism. She was always forgetting

the meal times regulated by the sun, and she could sleep at any time

and keep awake until any hour. It tired her to sit demurely like a young

lady, and she had a trick of lying down on the floor. She often laughed

in order not to cry, but she would not even smile at a great lady's

silly story, and she did not care a jot about the birthdays of the royal

family. The old aunts loved her body and soul, but they often said,

“Whatever is going to happen to the girl when the grandfather is gone?”

And the grandfather--good man--would have laid down his life to save her

a pain in her toe, but he had not a notion of the stuff she was made of.

His hobby was the study of the runic crosses with which the Isle of Man

abounds, and when she helped him with his rubbings and his casts he was

as merry as an old sand-boy. Though they occupied the same house, and

her bedroom that faced the harbour was next to his little musty study

that looked over the scullery slates, he lived always in the tenth

century and she lived somewhere in the twentieth.

The imprisoned linnet was beating at the bars of its cage. Before she

was aware of it she wanted to escape from the sleepy old scene, and had

begun to be consumed with longing for the great world outside. On summer

evenings she would go up Peel Hill and lie on the heather, where she had

first seen John Storm, and watch the ships weighing anchor in the bay

beyond the old dead castle walls, and wish she were going out with

them--out to the sea and the great cities north and south. But existence

closed in ever-narrowing circles round her, and she could see no way

out. Two years passed, and at eighteen she was fretting that half her

life had wasted away. She watched the sun until it sank into the sea,

and then she turned back to Glenfaba and the darkened region of the sky.

It was all the fault of their poverty, and their poverty was the fault

of the Church. She began to hate the Church; It had made her an orphan;

and when she thought of religion as a profession it seemed a selfish

thing anyway. If a man was really bent on so lofty an aim (as her own

father had been) he could not think of himself; he had to give up life

and love and the world, and then these always took advantage of him. But

people had to live in the world for all that, and what was the good of

burying yourself before you were dead?

Somehow her undefined wishes took shape in visions of John Storm, and

one day she heard he was home again. She went out on the hill that

evening and, being seen only by the gulls, she laughed and cried and

ran. It was just like poetry, for there he was himself lying on the

edge of the cliff near the very spot where she had been used to lie. On

seeing him she went more slowly, and began to poke about in the

heather as if she had seen nothing. He came up to her with both hands

outstretched, and then suddenly she remembered that she was wearing her

old jersey, and she flushed up to the eyes and nearly choked with shame.

She got better by-and-bye and talked away like a mill-wheel, and then

fearing he might think it was from something quite different, she began

to pull the heather and to tell him why she had been blushing. He did

not laugh at all. With a strange smile he said something in his deep

voice that made her blood run cold.

“But I'm to be a poor man myself in future, Glory. I've quarrelled with

my father. I'm going into the Church.”

It was a frightful blow to her, and the sun went down like a shot. But

it burst open the bars of her cage for all that. After John Storm had

found a curacy in London and taken Orders, he told them at Glenfaba that

among his honorary offices was to be that of chaplain to a great West

End hospital. This suggested to Glory the channel of escape. She would

go out as a hospital nurse. It was easier said than done, for hospital

nursing was fashionable, and she was three years too young. With great

labour she secured her appointment as probationer, and with greater

labour still overcame the fear and affection of her grandfather. But the

old parson was finally appeased when he heard that Glory's hospital was

the same that John Storm was to be chaplain of, and that they might go

up to London together.

III.

“Dear Grandfather Of Me, And Everybody At Glenfaba: Here I am at last,

dears, at the end of my Pilgrim's Progress, and the evening and the

morning' are the first day. It is now eleven o'clock at night, and I

am about to put myself to bed in my own little room at the hospital of

Martha's Vineyard, Hyde Park, London, England.

“The captain was quite right; the morning was as fresh as his flattery,

and before we got far beyond the Head most of the passengers were spread

out below like the three legs of Man. Being an old sea-doggie myself, I

didn't give it the chance to make me sick, but went downstairs and lay

quiet in my berth and deliberated great things. I didn't go up again

until we got into the Mersey, and then the passengers were on deck,

looking like sour buttermilk spilt out of the churn.

“What a glorious sight! The ships, the docks, the towers, the town! I

couldn't breathe for excitement until we got up to the landing-stage.

Mr. Storm put me into a cab, and for the sake of experience I insisted

on paying my own way. Of course he tried to trick me, but a woman's a

woman for a' that. As we drove up to Lime Street station there befell--a

porter. He carried my big trunk on his head (like a mushroom), and when

I bought my ticket he took me to the train while Mr. Storm went for

a newspaper. Being such a stranger, he was very kind, so I flung the

responsibility on Providence and gave him sixpence.

“There were two old ladies in the carriage beside ourselves, and the

train we travelled by was an express. It was perfectly delightful, and

for all the world like plunging into a stiff sou'wester off the rocks

at Contrary. But the first part of the journey was terrible. That tunnel

nearly made me shriek. It was a misty day too at Liverpool, and all the

way to Edge Hill they let off signals with a noise like battering-rams.

My nerves were on the rack; so taking advantage of the darkness of the

carriage, I began to sing. That calmed me, but it nearly drove the old

ladies out of their wits. \_They\_ screamed if I didn't; and just as I was

summoning the Almighty to attend to me a little in the middle of that

inferno, out we came as innocent as a baby. There was another of these

places just before getting into London. I suppose they are purgatories

through which you have to pass to get to these wonderful cities. Only

if I had been consulted in the making of the Litany ['from sudden death,

good Lord, deliver us') I should have made an exception for people in

tunnels.

“You never knew what an absolute ninny Glory is! I was burning with

such impatience to see London that when we came near it I couldn't see

anything for water under the brain. Approaching a great and mighty city

for the first time must be like going into the presence of majesty. Only

Heaven save me from such palpitation the day I become songstress to the

Queen!

“Mercy! what a roar and boom--a deep murmur as of ten hundred million

million moths humming away on a still evening in autumn! On a nearer

view it is more like a Tower-of-Babel concern, with its click and

clatter. The explosion of voices, the confused clamour, the dreadful

disorder--cars, wagons, omnibuses--it makes you feel religious and

rather cold down the back. What a needle in a haystack a poor girl must

be here if there is nobody above to keep track of her!

“Tell Aunt Rachel they are wearing another kind of bonnet in

London--more pokey in front--and say if I see the Queen I'll be sure to

tell her all about it.

“We didn't get to the hospital until nine, so I've not seen much of it

yet. The housekeeper gave me tea and told me I might go over the house,

as I wouldn't be wanted to begin duty before morning. So for an hour I

went from ward to ward like a female Wandering Jew. Such silence! I'm

afraid this hospital nursing is going to be a lockjaw business. And now

I'm going to bed--well, not homesick, you know, but just 'longing a lil

bit for all.' To-morrow morning I'll waken up to new sounds and sights,

and when I draw my blind I'll see the streets where the cars are forever

running and rattling. Then I'll think of Glenfaba and the birds singing

and rejoicing.

“Dispense my love throughout the island. Say that I love everybody just

the same now I'm a London lady as when I was a mere provincial girl, and

that when I'm a wonderful woman, and have brought the eyes of England

upon me, I'll come back and make amends. I can hear what grandfather is

saying: 'Gough bless me, what a girl, though!' Glory.

“P. S.--I've not said much about Mr. Storm. He left me at the door of

the hospital and went on to the house of his vicar, for that is where

he is to lodge, you know. On the way up I expended much beautiful poetry

upon him on the subject of love. The old girlies having dozed off, I

chanced to ask him if he liked to talk of it, but he said no, it was a

profanation. Love was too sacred, it was a kind of religion. Sometimes

it came unawares, sometimes it smouldered like fire under ashes,

sometimes it was a good angel, sometimes a devil, making you do things

and say things, and laying your life waste like winter. But I told

him it was just charming, and as for religion, there was nothing under

heaven like the devotion of a handsome and clever man to a handsome and

clever woman, when he gave up all the world for her, and his body and

his soul and everything that was his. I think he saw there was something

in that, for though he said nothing, there came a wonderful light

into his splendid eyes, and I thought if he wasn't going to be a

clergyman--but no matter. So long, dear!”

IV.

John Storm was the son of Lord Storm (a peer in his own right), and

nephew of the Prime Minister of England, the Earl of Erin. Two years

before John's birth the brothers had quarrelled about a woman. It was

John's mother. She had engaged herself to the younger brother, and

afterward fallen in love with the elder one. The voice of conscience

told her that it was her duty to carry out her engagement, and she did

so. Then the voice of conscience took sides with the laws of life and

told the lovers that they must renounce each other, and they both did

that as well. But the poor girl found it easier to renounce life than

love, and after flying to religion as an escape from the conflict

between conjugal duty and elemental passion she gave birth to her child

and died. She was the daughter of a rich banker, who had come from the

soil, and she had been brought up to consider marriage distinct from

love. Exchanging wealth for title, she found death in the deal.

Her husband had never stood in any natural affinity to her. On his

part, their marriage had been a loveless and selfish union, based on the

desire for an heir that he might found a family and cancel the unfair

position of a younger son. But the sin he committed against the

fundamental law, that marriage shall be founded only in love, brought

its swift revenge.

On hearing that the wife was dead, the elder brother came to attend the

funeral. The night before that event the husband felt unhappy about the

part he had played. He had given no occasion for scandal, but he had

never disguised, even from the mother of his son, the motives of his

marriage. The poor girl was gone; he had only trained himself for the

pursuit of her dowry, and the voice of love had been silent. Troubled by

such thoughts, he walked about his room all night long, and somewhere

in the first dead gray of dawn he went down to the death chamber that he

might look upon her face again. Opening the door, he heard the sound of

half-stifled sobs. Some one was leaning over the white face and weeping

like a man with a broken heart. It was his brother.

From that time forward Lord Storm considered himself the injured person.

He had never cared for his brother, and now he designed to wipe him out.

His son would do it. He was the heir to the earldom, for the earl had

never married. But a posthumous revenge was too trivial. The earl had

gone into politics and was making a name. Lord Storm had missed his own

opportunities, though he had got himself called to the Upper House, but

his son should be brought up to eclipse everything.

To this end the father devoted his life to the boy's training. All

conventional education was wrong in principle. Schools and colleges and

the study of the classics were drivelling folly, with next to nothing to

do with life. Travel was the great teacher. “You shall travel as far

as the sun,” he said. So the boy was taken through Europe and Asia

and learned something of many languages. He became his father's daily

companion, and nowhere the father went was it thought wrong for the boy

to go also. Conventional morality was considered mawkish. The chief

aim of home training was to bring children up in total ignorance, if

possible, of the most important facts and functions of life. But it was

\_not\_ possible, and hence suppression, dissimulation, lying, and, under

the ban of secret sin, one half the world's woe. So the boy was taken to

the temples of Greece and India, and even to Western casinos and dancing

gardens. Before he was twenty he had seen something of nearly everything

the world has in it.

When the time came to think of his career England was in straits about

her colonial empire. The vast lands over sea wanted to take care of

themselves. It was the moment of the “British North America Act,” and

that gave the father his cue for action. While his brother the earl was

fiddling the country to the tune of limited self-government for Crown

colonies, the father of John Storm conceived the daring idea of breaking

up the entire empire, including the United Kingdom, into self-governing

states. They were to be the “United States of Great Britain.”

This was to be John Storm's policy, and to work it out Lord Storm set up

a house in the Isle of Man where he might always look upon his plan in

miniature. There he established a bureau for the gathering of the data

that his son would need to use hereafter. Newspapers came to him in his

lonely retreat from all quarters of the globe, and he cut out everything

relating to his subject. His library was a dusty room lined all around

with brown-paper pockets, which were labelled with the names of colonies

and counties.

“It will take us two generations to do it, my boy, but we'll alter the

history of England.”

At fifty he was iron-gray, and had a head like a big owl.

Meanwhile the object of these grand preparations, the offspring of that

loveless union, had a personality all his own. It seemed as if he had

been built for a big man every way, and Nature had been arrested in the

making of him. When people looked at his head they felt he ought to have

been a giant, but he was far from rivalling the children of Anak. When

they listened to his conversation they thought he might turn out to be a

creature of genius, but perhaps he was only a man of powerful moods. The

best strength of body and mind seemed to have gone into his heart. It

may be that the sorrowful unrest of his mother and her smothered passion

had left their red stream in John Storm's soul.

When he was a boy he would cry at a beautiful view in Nature, at a

tale of heroism, or at any sentimental ditty sung excruciatingly in the

streets. Seeing a bird's nest that had been robbed of its eggs he burst

into tears; but when he came upon the bleeding, broken shells in the

path, the tears turned to fierce wrath and mad rage, and he snatched

up a gun out of his father's room and went out to take the life of the

offender.

On coming to the Isle of Man he noticed as often as he went to church

that a little curly red-headed girl kept staring at him from the vicar's

pew. He was a man of two-and-twenty, but the child's eyes tormented him.

At any time of day or night he could call up a vision of their

gleaming brightness. Then his father sent him to Canada to watch the

establishment of the Dominion, and when he came back he brought a

Canadian canoe and an American yacht, and certain democratic opinions.

The first time he sailed the yacht in Manx waters he sighted a disabled

boat and rescued two children. One of them was the girl of the vicar's

pew, grown taller and more winsome. She nestled up to him when he lifted

her into the yacht, and, without knowing why, he kept his arms about

her.

After that he called his yacht the \_Gloria\_, in imitation of her

name, and sometimes took the girl out on the sea. Notwithstanding the

difference of the years between them, they had their happy boy and girl

days together. In her white jersey and stocking-cap she looked every

inch a sailor. When the wind freshened and the boat plunged she stood to

the tiller like a man, and he thought her the sweetest sight ever seen

in a cockpit. And when the wind saddened and the boom came aboard she

was the cheeriest companion in a calm. She sang, and so did he, and

their voices went well together. Her favourite song was “Come, Lasses

and Lads”; his was “John Peel”; and they would sing them off and on for

an hour at a spell. Thus on a summer evening, when the bay was lying

like a tired monster asleep, and every plash of an oar was echoing on

the hills, the people on the land would hear them coming around the

castle rock with their--

“D'ye ken John Peel, with his coat so gay?

D'ye ken John Peel at the break of day?

D'ye ken John P-e-e-l....”

For two years he amused himself with the child, and then realized that

she was a child no longer. The pity of the girl's position took hold

of him. This sunny soul with her sportfulness, her grace of many gifts,

with her eyes that flashed and gleamed like lightning, with her voice

that was like the warble of a bird, this golden-headed gipsy, this

witch, this fairy--what was the life that lay before her? Pity gave

place to a different feeling, and then he was aware of a pain in the

breast when he thought of the girl. As often as her eyes lasted upon

him he felt his face tingle and burn. He began to be conscious of an

imprisoned side to his nature, the passionate side, and he drew back

afraid. This wild power, this tempest, this raging fire within, God

only knew whither it was to lead him. And then he had given a hostage to

fortune, or his father had for him.

From his father's gloomy house at Knockaloe, where the winds were ever

droning in the trees, he looked over to Glenfaba, and it seemed to him

like a little white cloud lit up by the sunshine. His heart was forever

calling to the sunny spot over there, “Glory! Glory!” The pity of it was

that the girl seemed to understand everything, and to know quite well

what kept them apart. She flushed with shame that he should see her

wearing the same clothes constantly, and with head aside and furtive

glances she talked of the days when he would leave the island for good,

and London would take him and make much of him, and he would forget

all about his friends in that dead old place. Such talk cut him to the

quick. Though he had seen a deal of the world, he did not know much

about the conversation of women.

The struggle was brief. He began to wear plainer clothes--an Oxford

tweed coat and a flannel shirt--to talk about fame as an empty word, and

to tell his father that he was superior to all stupid conventions.

His father sent him to Australia. Then the grown-up trouble of his life

began.

He passed through the world now with eyes open for the privations of the

poor, and he saw everything in a new light. Unconsciously he was doing

in another way what his mother had done when she flew to religion

from stifled passion. He had been brought up as a sort of imperialist

democrat, but now he bettered his father's instructions. England did not

want more Parliaments, she wanted more apostles. It was not by giving

votes to a nation, but by strengthening the soul of a nation, that it

became great and free. The man for the hour was not he who revolved

schemes for making himself famous, but he who was ready to renounce

everything, and if he was great was willing to become little, and if he

was rich to become poor. There was room for an apostle--for a thousand

apostles--who, being dead to the world's glory, its money or its calls,

were prepared to do all in Christ's spirit, and to believe that in the

renunciation, which was the “secret” of Jesus, lay the only salvation

remaining for the world.

He tramped through the slums of Melbourne and Sydney, and afterward

through the slums of London, returned to the Isle of Man a Christian

Socialist, and announced to his father his intention of going into the

Church.

The old man did not fume and fly out. He staggered back to his room like

a bullock to its pen after it has had its death-blow in the shambles.

In the midst of his dusty old bureau, with its labelled packets full of

cuttings, he realized that twenty years of his life had been wasted. A

son was a separate being, of a different growth, and a father was only

the seed at the root that must decay and die.

Then he made some show of resistance.

“But with your talents, boy, surely you are not going to throw away your

chances of a great name?”

“I care nothing for a great name, father,” said John. “I shall win a

greater victory than any that Parliament can give me.”

“But, my boy, my dear boy! one must either be the camel or the

camel-driver; and then society----”

“I hate society, and society would hate me. It is only for the sake of

the few godly men that God spares it as he spared Sodom for Lot's sake.”

Having braved this ordeal and nearly broken the heart of his old father,

he turned for his reward to Glory. He found her at her usual haunt on

the headlands.

“I was blushing when you came up, wasn't I?” she said. “Shall I tell you

why?”

“Why?”

“It was this,” she said, with a sweep of her hand across her bosom.

He looked puzzled.

“Don't you understand? This old rag--it's the one I was wearing before

you went away.”

He wanted to tell her how well she looked in it--better than ever now

that her bosom showed under its seamless curves, and her figure had

grown so lithe and shapely. But though she was laughing he saw she was

ashamed of her poverty, and he thought to comfort her.

“I'm to be a poor man myself in future, Glory. I've quarrelled with my

father. I'm going to take Orders.”

Her face fell. “Oh, I didn't think anybody would be poor who could help

it. To be a clergyman is all right for a poor man, perhaps, but I hate

to be poor; it's horrid.”

Then darkness fell upon his eyes and he felt sad and sick. Glory had

disappointed him. She was vain, she was worldly, she was incapable of

the higher things; she would never know what a sacrifice he had made

for her; she would think nothing of him now; but he would go on all the

same, the more earnestly because the devil had drawn a bow at him and

the arrow had gone in up to the feathers.

“With God's help I shall nail my colours to the mast,” he said.

Thus he made up his mind to follow the unrolling of the scroll. He had

the strength called character. The Church had been his beacon before,

but now it was to be his refuge.

He found no difficulty in making the necessary preparations. For a year

he read the Anglican divines--Jeremy Taylor, Hooker, Butler, Waterland,

Pearson, and Pusey--and when the time came for his ordination his uncle,

the Earl of Erin, who was now Prime Minister, obtained him a title to

a curacy under the popular and influential Canon Wealthy of All Saints,

Belgravia. The Bishop of London gave letters dimissory to the Bishop of

Sodor and Man, by whom he was examined and ordained.

On the morning of his departure for London his father, with whom there

had in the meantime been trying scenes, left him this final word of

farewell: “As I understand that you intend to lead the life of poverty,

I presume that you do not need your mother's dowry, and I shall hold

myself at liberty to dispose of it elsewhere, \_unless\_ you require it

for the use of the young lady who is, I hear, to go up with you.”

V.

“I will be a poor man among poor men,” said John Storm to himself as he

drove to his vicar's house in Eaton Place, but he awoke next morning

in a bedroom that did not answer to his ideas of a life of poverty. A

footman came with hot water and tea, and also a message from the canon

overnight saying he would be pleased to see Mr. Storm in the study after

breakfast.

The study was a sumptuous apartment immediately beneath, with soft

carpets on which his feet made no noise, and tiger-skins over the

backs of chairs. As he entered it a bright-faced man in middle life,

clean-shaven, wearing a gold-mounted \_pince-nez\_, and bubbling over with

politeness, stepped forward to receive him.

“Welcome to London, my dear Mr. Storm. When the letter came from

the Prime Minister I said to my daughter Felicity--you will see her

presently--I trust you will be good friends--I said, 'It is a privilege,

my child, to meet any wish of the dear Earl of Erin, and I am proud

to be in at the beginning of a career that is sure to be brilliant and

distinguished.'”

John Storm made some murmur of dissent.

“I trust you found your rooms to your taste, Mr. Storm?”

John Storm had found them more than he expected or desired.

“Ah, well, humble but comfortable, and in any case please regard them as

your own, to receive whom you please therein, and to dispense your own

hospitalities. This house is large enough. We shall not meet oftener

than we wish, so we can not quarrel. The only meal we need take together

is dinner. Don't expect too much. Simple but wholesome--that's all we

can promise you in a clergyman's family.”

John Storm answered that food was an indifferent matter to him, and that

half an hour after dinner he never knew what he had eaten. The canon

laughed and began again.

“I thought it best you should come to us, being a stranger in London,

though I confess I have never had but one of my clergy residing with

me before. He is here now. You'll see him by-and-bye. His name is

Golightly, a simple, worthy young man, from one of the smaller colleges,

I believe. Useful, you know, devoted to me and to my daughter, but of

course a different sort of person altogether, and--er----”

It was a peculiarity of the canon that whatever he began to talk about,

he always ended by talking of himself.

“I sent for you this morning, not having had the usual opportunity of

meeting before, that I might tell you something of our organization and

your own duties.... You see in me the head of a staff of six clergy.”

John Storm was not surprised; a great preacher must be followed by

flocks of the poor; it was natural that they should wish him to help

them and to minister to them.

“We have no poor in my parish, Mr. Storm.”

“No poor, sir?”

“On the contrary, her Majesty herself is one of my parishioners.”

“That must be a great grief to you, sir?”

“Oh, the poor! Ah, yes, certainly. Of course, we have our associated

charities, such as the Maternity Home, founded in Soho by Mrs.

Callender--a worthy old Scotswoman--odd and whimsical, perhaps, but

rich, very rich and influential. My clergy, however, have enough to do

with the various departments of our church work. For instance, there is

the Ladies' Society, the Fancy Needlework classes, and the Decorative

Flower Guild, not to speak of the daughter churches and the ministration

in hospitals, for I always hold--er----”

John Storm's mind had been wandering, but at the mention of the hospital

he looked up eagerly.

“Ah, yes, the hospital. Your own duties will be chiefly concerned with

our excellent hospital of Martha's Vineyard. You will have the spiritual

care of all patients and nurses--yes, nurses also--within its precincts,

precisely as if it were your parish. 'This is my parish,' you will say

to yourself, and treat it accordingly. Not yet being in full Orders,

you will be unable to administer the sacrament, but you will have one

service daily in each of the wards, taking the wards in rotation. There

are seven wards, so there will be one service in each ward once a week,

for I always say that fewer----”

“Is it enough?” said John. “I shall be only too pleased----”

“Ah, well, we'll see. On Wednesday evenings we have service in the

church, and nurses not on night duty are expected to attend. Some fifty

of them altogether, and rather a curious compound. Ladies among them?

Yes, the daughters of gentlemen, but also persons of all classes. You

will hold yourself responsible for their spiritual welfare. Let me

see--this is Friday--say you take the sermon on Wednesday next, if that

is agreeable. As to views, my people are of all shades of colour, so I

ask my clergy to take strictly \_via media\_ views--strictly \_via media\_.

Do you intone?”

John Storm had been wandering again, but he recovered himself in time to

say he did not.

“That is a pity; our choir is so excellent--two violins, a viola,

clarinet, 'cello, double bass, the trumpets and drums, and of course the

organ. Our organist himself----”

At that moment a young clergyman came into the room, making apologies

and bowing subserviently.

“Ah, this is Mr. Golightly--the-h'm--Hon. and Rev. Mr. Storm.--You will

take charge of Mr. Storm and bring him to church on Sunday morning.”

Mr. Golightly delivered his message. It was about the organist. His

wife had called to say that he had been removed to the hospital for

some slight operation, and there was some difficulty about the singer of

Sunday morning's anthem.

“Most irritating! Bring her up.” The curate went out backward. “I shall

ask you to excuse me, Mr. Storm. My daughter, Felicity--ah, here she

is.”

A tall young woman in spectacles entered.

“This is our new housemate, Mr. Storm, nephew of dear Lord Erin.

Felicity, my child, I wish you to drive Mr. Storm round and introduce

him to our people, for I always say a young clergyman in London----”

John Storm mumbled something about the Prime Minister.

“Going to pay your respects to your uncle now? Very good and proper.

Next week will do for the visits. Yes, yes. Come in, Mrs. Koenig.”

A meek, middle-aged woman had appeared at the door. She was dark, and

had deep luminous eyes with the moist look to be seen in the eyes of a

tired old terrier.

“This is the wife of our organist and choir master. Good day! Kindest

greetings to the Prime Minister.... And, by the way, let us say Monday

for the beginning of your chaplaincy at the hospital.”

The Earl of Erin, as First Lord of the Treasury, occupied the narrow,

unassuming brick house which is the Treasury residence in Downing

Street. Although the official head of the Church, with power to appoint

its bishops and highest dignitaries, he was secretly a sceptic, if not

openly a derider of spiritual things. For this attitude his early love

passage had been chiefly accountable. That strife between duty and

passion which had driven the woman he loved to religion had driven him

in the other direction and left a broad swath of desolation in his soul.

He had seen little of his brother since that evil time, and nothing

whatever of his brother's son. Then John had written, “I am soon to

be bound by the awful tie of the priesthood,” and he had thought it

necessary to do something for him. When John was announced he felt a

thrill of tender feeling to which he had long been a stranger. He got

up and waited. The young man with his mother's face and the eyes of an

enthusiast was coming down the long corridor.

John Storm saw his uncle first in the spacious old cabinet room which

looks out on the little garden and the Park. He was a gaunt old man

with, meagre mustache and hair, and a face like a death's head. He

held out his hand and smiled. His hand was cold and his smile was half

tearful and half saturnine.

“You are like your mother, John.”

John never knew her.

“When I saw her last you were a child in arms and she was younger than

you are now.”

“Where was that, uncle?”

“In her coffin, poor girl.”

The Prime Minister shuffled some papers and said, “Well, is there

anything you wish for?”

“Nothing. I've come to thank you for what you've done already.”

The Prime Minister made a deprecatory gesture.

“I almost wish you had chosen another career, John. Still, the Church

has its opportunities and its chances, and if I can ever----”

“I am satisfied; more than satisfied,” said John. “My choice is based, I

trust, on a firm vocation. God's work is great, sir; the greatest of all

in London. That is why I am so grateful to you. Think of it, sir----”

John was leaning forward in his chair with one arm stretched out.

“Of the five millions of people in this vast city, not one million cross

the threshold of church or chapel. And then remember their condition. A

hundred thousand live in constant want, slowly starving to death, every

day and hour, and a quarter of the old people of London die as paupers.

Isn't it a wonderful scene, sir? If a man is willing to be spiritually

dead to the world--to leave family and friends--to go forth never to

return, as one might go to his execution----”

The Prime Minister listened to the ardent young man who was talking to

him there with his mother's voice, and then said--

“I'm sorry.”

“Sorry?”

“I'm afraid I've made a mistake.”

John Storm looked puzzled.

“I've sent you to the wrong place, John. When you wrote, I naturally

supposed you were thinking of the Church as a career, and I tried to put

you in the way of it. Do you know anything of your vicar?”

John knew that fame spoke of him as a great preacher--one of the few

who had passed through their Pentecost and come out with the gift of

tongues.

“Precisely!” The Prime Minister gave a bitter little laugh. “But let me

tell you something about him. He was a poor curate in the country where

the lord of the manor chanced to be a lady. He married the lady of the

manor. His wife died and he bought a London parish. Then, by the help

of an old actor who gave lessons in elocution, he--well, he set up his

Pentecost. Since then he has been a fashionable preacher and frequents

the houses of great people. Ten years ago he was made an honorary

canon, and, when he hears of an appointment to a bishopric, he says in a

tearful voice, 'I don't know what the dear Queen has got against me.'”

“Well, sir?”

“Well, if I had known you felt like that I should scarcely have sent you

to Canon Wealthy. And yet I hardly know where else a young man of your

opinions ... I'm afraid the Church has a good many Canon Wealthys in

it.”

“God forbid!” said John. “No doubt there are Pharisees in these days

just as in the days of Christ, but the Church is still the pillar of the

State----”

“The caterpillar, you mean, boy--eating out its heart and its vitals.”

The Prime Minister gave another bitter little laugh, then looked quickly

into John's flushed face and said:

“But it's poor work for an old man to sap away a young man's

enthusiasm.”

“You can't do that, uncle,” said John, “because God is the absolute

ruler of all things, good and bad, and he governs both to his glory. Let

him only give us strength to endure our exile----”

“I don't like to hear you talk like that, John. I think I know what the

upshot will be. There's a gang of men about--Anglican Catholics they

call themselves; well, remember the German proverb, 'Every priestling

hides a popeling.' ... And if you \_are\_ to be in the Church, John, is

there any reason why you shouldn't marry and be reasonable? To tell you

the truth, I'm rather a lonely old man, whatever I may seem, and if your

mother's son would give me a sort of a grandson--eh?”

The Prime Minister was pretending to laugh again.

“Come, John, come, it seems a pity--a fine young fellow like you, too.

Are there no sweet young girls about in these days? Or are they all dead

and gone since I was a young fellow? I could give you a wide choice, you

know, for when a man stands high enough ... in fact, you would find

me reasonable--you might have anybody you liked, rich or poor, dark or

fair.----”

John Storm had been sitting in torment, and now he rose to go. “No,

uncle,” he said, in a thicker voice, “I shall never marry. A clergyman

who is married is bound to life by too many ties. Even his affection for

his wife is a tie. And then there is her affection for the world, its

riches, its praise, its honours.----”

“Well, well, we'll say no more. After all, it's better than running

wild, and that's what most young men seem to be doing nowadays. But

then your long education abroad--and your poor father left to look after

himself! Good-day to you. Come and see me now and then. How like your

mother you are sometimes! Good-day!”

When the door of the cabinet room closed on John Storm the Prime

Minister thought, “Poor boy, he's laying up for himself a big heartache

one of these fine days!”

And John Storm, going down the street with uncertain step, said to

himself: “How strange he should talk like that! But, thank God, he

didn't produce a flicker in me. I died to all that a year ago.”

Then he lifted his head and his footstep lightened, and deep in some

secret place the thought came proudly, “She shall see that to renounce

the world is to possess the world--that a man may be poor and have all

the kingdom of the world at his feet.”

He went back by the Underground from Westminster Bridge. It was midday,

and the train was crowded. His spirits were high and he talked with

every one near him. Getting out at Victoria, he came upon his vicar on

the platform and saluted him rather demonstratively. The canon responded

with some restraint and then stepped into a first-class carriage.

On turning into Eaton Place he came upon a group of people standing

around something that lay on the pavement. It was an old woman, a

tattered, bedraggled creature with a pinched and pallid face. “Is it

an accident?” a gentleman was saying, and somebody answered, “No,

sir, she's gorn off in a faint.” “Why doesn't some one take her to the

hospital?” said the gentleman, and then, like the Levite, he passed

by on the other side. The butcher's cart drew up at the curb, and the

butcher jumped down, saying, “There never \_is\_ no p'lice about when

they're wanted for anythink.”

“But they aren't wanted here, friend,” said somebody from the outside.

It was John Storm, and he was pushing his way through the crowd.

“Will somebody knock at that door, please?” He lifted the old thing in

his arms and carried her toward the canon's house. The footman looked

aghast. “Let me know when the canon returns,” said John, and then

marched up the carpeted stairs to his rooms.

An hour afterward the old woman opened her eyes and said: “Anythink gorn

wrong? Wot's up? Is it the work'us?”

It was a clear case of destitution and collapse. John Storm began to

feed the old creature with the chicken and milk sent up for his own

lunch.

Some time in the afternoon he heard the voice and step of the vicar in

the room below. Going down to the study, he was about to knock; but the

voice continued in varying tones, now loud, now low. During a pause he

rapped, and then, with noticeable irritation, the voice cried, “Come

in!”

He found the vicar, with a manuscript in hand, rehearsing his Sunday's

sermon. It was a shock to John, but it helped him to understand what his

uncle had said about the canon's Pentecost.

The canon's brow was clouded. “Ah, is it you? I was sorry to see you

getting out of a third-class carriage to-day, Mr. Storm.”

John answered that it was the poor man's class, and therefore, he

thought, it ought to be his.

“You do yourself an injustice, Mr. Storm. Besides, to tell you the

truth, I don't choose that my assistant clergy----”

John looked ashamed. “If that is your view, sir,” he said, “I don't know

what you'll say to what I've been doing since.”

“I've heard of it, and I confess I'm not pleased. Whatever your old

\_protégée\_ may be, my house is no place for her. I help to maintain

charitable institutions for such cases, and I will ask you to lose no

time in having her removed to the hospital.”

John was crushed. “Very well, sir, if that is your wish; only I thought

you said my rooms----Besides, the poor old thing fills her place as well

as Queen Victoria, and perhaps the angels are watching the one as much

as the other.”

Next day John Storm called to see the old woman at Martha's Vineyard,

and he saw the matron, the house doctor, and a staff nurse as well.

His adventure was known to everybody at the hospital. Once or twice he

caught looks of amused compassion, and heard a twitter of laughter. As

he stood by the bed, the old woman muttered: “I knoo ez it wuzn't the

work'us, my dear. He spoke to me friendly and squeedged my 'and.”

Coming through the wards he had looked for a face he could not see; but

just then he was aware of a young woman, in the print dress and white

apron of a nurse, standing in silence at the bed-head. It was Glory, and

her eyes were wet with tears.

“You mustn't do such things,” she said hoarsely; “I can't bear it,” and

she stamped her foot. “Don't you see that these people----”

But she turned about and was gone before he could reply. Glory was

ashamed for him. Perhaps she had been taking his part! He felt the blood

mounting to his face, and his cheeks tingling. Glory! His eyes were

swimming, and he dared not look after her; but he could have found it in

his heart to kiss the old bag of bones on the bed.

That night he wrote to the parson in the island: “Glory has left off

her home garments, and now looks more beautiful than ever in the white

simplicity of the costume of the nurse. Her vocation is a great one.

God grant she may hold on to it!” Then something about the fallacy

of ceremonial religion and the impossibility of pleasing God by such

religious formalities. “But if we have publicans and Pharisees now, even

as they existed in Christ's time, all the more service is waiting for

that man for whom life has no ambitions, death no terrors. I thank God I

am in a great measure dead to these things.... I will fulfil my promise

to look after Glory. My constant prayer is against Agag. It is so easy

for him to get a foothold in a girl's heart here. This great new world,

with its fashions, its gaieties, its beauty, and its brightness--no

wonder if a beautiful young girl, tingling with life and ruddy health,

should burn with impatience to fling herself into the arms of it. Agag

is in London, and as insinuating as ever.”

VI.

On Sunday morning his fellow-curate came to his room to accompany him

to church. The Rev. Joshua Golightly was a little man with a hook nose,

small keen eyes, scanty hair, and a voice that was something between

a whisper and a whistle. He bowed subserviently, and made meek little

speeches.

“I do trust you will not be disappointed with our church and service. We

do all we can to make them worthy of our people.”

As they walked down the streets he talked first of the church

officers--there were honorary wardens, gentlemen sidesmen, and lady

superintendents of floral decorations; then of the choir, which

consisted of organist and choir master, professional members, voluntary

members, and choir secretary. The anthem was sung by a professional

singer, generally the tenor from the opera; the canon could always

get such people--he was a great favourite with artistes and “the

profession.” Of course, the singers were paid, and the difficulty this

week had been due to the exorbitant fee demanded by the Italian barytone

from Covent Garden.

Disappointment and disenchantment were falling on John Storm at every

step.

All Saints' was a plain, dark structure with a courtyard in front.

The bells were ringing, and a line of carriages was drawing up at the

portico as at the entrance to a theatre, discharging their occupants

and passing on. Vergers in yellow and buff, with knee-breeches, silk

stockings, and powdered wigs, were receiving the congregation at the

doors.

“Let us go in by the west door--I should like you to see the screen to

advantage,” said Mr. Golightly.

The inside of the church was gorgeous. As far up as the clerestory

every wall was frescoed, and every timber of the roof was gilded. At the

chancel end there was a wrought-iron screen of delicate tracery, and the

altar was laden with gold candlesticks. Above the altar and at either

side of it were stained glass windows. The morning sun was shining

through them and filling the chancel with warm splashes of light. Ladies

in beautiful spring dresses were following the vergers up the aisles.

“This way,” the curate whispered, and John Storm entered the sacristy by

a low doorway like the auditorium entrance to a stage. There he met

some six others of his fellow-curates. They nodded to him and went

on arranging their surplices. The choir were gathering in their own

quarters, where the violins were tuning up and the choir boys were

laughing and behaving after their kind.

The bell slackened and stopped, and the organ began to play. When all

were ready they stepped into a long corridor and formed in line with

their faces to the chancel and their backs to a little door, at which a

verger in blue stood guard.

“The canon's room,” whispered Mr. Golightly.

A prayer was said by some one, the choir sang the response, and then

they walked in procession to their places in the chancel, the choir

boys first, the canon last. Seen through the tracery of the screen, the

congregation appeared to fill every sitting in the church with a blaze

of light and colour, and the atmosphere was laden with delicate perfume.

The service was choral. An anthem was sung at the close of the sermon,

the collection being made during the hymn before it. The professional

singer looked like any other chorister in his surplice, save for his

swarthy face and heavy mustache.

The canon preached. He wore his doctor's hood of scarlet cloth. His

sermon was eloquent and literary, and it was delivered with elocutionary

power. There were many references to great writers, painters, and

musicians, including a panegyric on Michael Angelo and a quotation

from Browning. The sermon concluded with a passage from Dante in the

original.

John Storm was dazed and perplexed. When the service was over he came

out alone, returning down the nave, which was now empty but still

fragrant. Among other notices pasted on a board in the porch he found

this one: “The vicar and wardens, having learned with regret that purses

have been lost on leaving the church, recommend the congregation to

bring only such money as they may need for the offertory.”

Had he been to the house of God? No matter! God ruled the world in

righteousness and wrought out everything to his own glory.

Next morning he began duty as chaplain at the hospital, and when he had

finished the reading of his first prayers he could see that he had lived

down some of the derision due to his adventure with the old woman. That

poor old bag of bones was sinking and could not last much longer.

Going out by way of the dispensary, he saw Glory again, and heard that

she had been at church the day before. It was lovely. All those hundreds

of nice-looking people in gay colours, with the rustle of silk and the

hum of voices--it was beautiful--it reminded her of the sea in summer.

He asked her what she thought of the sermon, and she said, “Well,

it wasn't religion exactly--not what I call religion--not a 'reg'lar

rousing rampage for sowls,' as old Chalse used to say, but----”

“Glory,” he said impetuously, “I'm to preach my first sermon on

Wednesday.”

He did not ask her to come, but inquired if she was on night duty. She

answered No, and then somebody called her.

“She'll be there,” he told himself, and he walked home with uplifted

head. He would look for her; he would catch her eye; she would see that

it was not necessary to be ashamed of him again.

And then close behind, very close, came recollections of her appearance.

He could reconstruct her new dress by memory--her face was easy to

remember. “After all, beauty is a kind of virtue,” he thought. “And all

natural friendship is good for the progress of souls if it is built upon

the love of God.”

He wrote nothing and learned nothing by heart. The only preparation he

made for his sermon was thought and prayer. When the Wednesday night

came he was very nervous. But the church was nearly empty, and the

vergers, who were in their everyday clothes, had only partially lit

up the nave. The canon had done him the honour to be present; his

fellow-curates read the prayers and lessons.

As he ascended the pulpit he thought he saw the white bonnets of a group

of nurses in the dim distance of one of the aisles, but he did not see

Glory and he dared not look again. His text was, “My kingdom is not

of this world.” He gave it out twice, and his voice sounded strange to

himself--so weak and thin in that hollow place.

When he began to speak his sentences seemed awkward and difficult. The

things of the world were temporal and the nations of the world were out

of harmony with God. Men were biting and devouring each other who ought

to live as brothers. “Cheat or be cheated” was the rule of life, as

the modern philosopher had said. On the one side were the many dying of

want, on the other side the few occupied with poetry and art, writing

addresses to flowers, and peddling--in the portraiture of the moods

and methods of love, living lives of frivolity, taking pleasure in mere

riches and the lusts of the eye, while thousands of wretched mortals

were grovelling in the mire.... Then where was our refuge? ...

The Church was the refuge of God's people ... from Christ came the

answer--the answer--the----

His words would not flow. He fought hard, threw out another passage,

then stammered, began again, stammered again, felt hot, made a fresh

effort, flagged, rattled out some words he had fixed in his mind,

perspired, lost his voice, and finally stopped in the middle of a

sentence and said, “And now to God the Father--” and came down from the

pulpit.

His sermon had been a failure, and he knew it. On going back to the

sacristy the Reverend Golightly congratulated him with a simper and a

vapid smile. The canon was more honest but more vain. He mingled lofty

advice with gentle reproof. Mr. Storm had taken his task too lightly.

Better if he had written his sermon and read it. Whatever might

serve for the country, congregations in London--at All Saints'

especially--expected culture and preparation.

“For my own part I confess--nay, I am proud to declare--my watchword is

Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse!”

As for the doctrine of the sermon it was not above question. It was

necessary to live in the \_nineteenth\_ century, and it was impossible to

apply to its conditions the rules of life that had been proper to the

first.

John Storm made no resistance. He slept badly that night. As often as he

dozed off he dreamed that he was trying to do something he could not do,

and when he awoke he became hot as with the memory of a disgrace. And

always at the back of his shame was the thought of Glory.

Next morning he was alone in his room and fumbling the toast on his

breakfast table, when the door opened and a cheery voice cried, “May I

no come in, laddie?”

An elderly lady entered. She was tall and slight and had a long, fine

face, with shrewd but kindly eyes, and nearly snow-white hair.

“I'm Jane Callender,” she said, “and I couldna wait for an introduction

or sic bother, but must just come and see ye. Ay, laddie, it was a

bonnie sermon yon! I havena heard the match of it since I came frae

Edinburgh and sat under the good Doctor Guthrie. Now \_he\_ was nae

slavish reader neither--none of your paper preachers was Thomas. My

word, but you gave us the right doctrine, too! They're given over to

the worship of Beelzebub--half these church-going folks! Oh, these

Pharisees! They are enough to sour milk. I wish they had one neck and

somebody would just squeeze it. Now, where did ye hear that, Jane? But

no matter! And the lasses are worse than the men, with their fashions

and foldololls. They love Jesus, but they like him best in heaven, not

bothering down in Belgravia. But I must be going my ways. I left James

on the street, and there's nae living with the man if you keep his

horses waiting. Good-morning til ye! But eh, laddie, I'm afraid for ye!

I'm thinking--I'm thinking ... but come and see me at Victoria Square.

Good-morning!”

She had rattled this off at a breath, and had hardly given time for a

reply, when her black silk was rustling down the stairs.

John Storm remembered that the canon had spoken of her. She was the good

woman who kept the home for girls at Soho.

“The good creature only came to comfort me,” he thought. But Glory! What

was Glory thinking? That morning after prayers at the hospital he went

in search of her in the out-patient department, but she pretended to be

overwhelmed with work, and only nodded and smiled and excused herself.

“I haven't got a moment this morning either for the king or his dog. I'm

up to my eyes in bandages, and have fourteen plasters on my conscience,

and now I must run away to my little boy whose leg was amputated on

Saturday.”

He understood her, but he came back in the evening and was resolved to

face it out.

“What did you think of last night, Glory?” Then she put on a look of

blank amazement.

“Why, what happened? Oh, of course, the sermon! How stupid of me! Do you

know I forgot all about it?”

“You were not there, then?”

“Don't ask me. Really, I'm ashamed; after my promise to grandfather,

too! But Wednesday doesn't count anyway, does it? You'll preach on

Sunday--and then!”

His feeling of relief was followed by a sense of deeper humiliation.

Glory had not even troubled herself to remember. Evidently he was

nothing to her, nothing; while she----

He walked home through St. James's Park, and under the tall trees the

peaceful silence of the night came down on him. The sharp clack of the

streets was deadened to a low hum as of the sea afar off. Across the

gardens he could see the clock in the tower of Westminster, and hear

the great bell strike the quarters. London! How little and selfish all

personal thoughts were in the contemplation of the mighty city! He had

been thinking only of himself and his own little doings. It was all so

small and pitiful!

“Did my shame at my failure in the pulpit proceed solely from fear of

losing the service of God, or did it proceed from wounded ambition, from

pride, from thoughts of Glory----”

But the peaceful stars were over him. It was a majestic night.

VII.

“Martha's Vineyard.

“Dear Auntie Rachel: Tell grandpa, to begin with, that John Storm

preached his first sermon on Wednesday last, and, according to

programme, I was there to hear it. Oh, God bless me! What a time I had

of it! He broke down in the middle, taking stage fright or pulpit fright

or some such devilry, though there was nothing to be afraid of except a

bandboxful of chattering girls who didn't listen, and a few old

fogies with ear-trumpets. I was sitting in the darkness at the back,

effectually concealed from the preacher by the broad shoulders of Ward

Sister Allworthy, who is an example of 'delicate femaleism' just verging

on old-maidenism. They tell me the 'discoorse' was a short one, but

I never got so many prayers into the time in all my born days, and my

breath was coming and going so fast that the Sister must have thought

they had set up a pumping-engine in the pew behind her. Our poor,

heavy-laden Mr. Storm has been here since then with his sad and eager

face, but I hadn't the stuff in me to tell him the truth about the

sermon, so I told him I had forgotten to go and hear it, and may the

Lord have mercy on my soul!

“You want to know how I employ my time? Well, lest you should think I

give up my days to dreams and my nights to idleness, I hasten to tell

that I rise at 6, breakfast at 6.30, begin duty at 7, sup at 9.30 P.M.,

gossip till 10, and then go into my room and put myself to bed; and

there I am at the end of it. Being only a probationer, I am chiefly in

the out-patient department, where my duties are to collect the things

wanted at the dispensary, make the patients ready to see the surgeon,

and pass them on to the dressers. My patients at present are the

children, and I love them, and shall break my heart when I have to leave

them. They are not always too well looked after by the surgeon, but

that doesn't matter in the least, because, you see, they are constantly

watched by the best and most learned doctor in the world--that's me.

“Last Saturday I had my first experience of the operating theatre.

Gracious goodness! I thought I shouldn't survive it. Fortunately, I had

my dressings and sponges to look after, so I just stiffened my back with

a sort of imaginary six-foot steel bar, and went on 'like blazes.' But

some of these staff nurses are just 'ter'ble'; they take a professional

pleasure in descending to that inferno, and wouldn't miss a 'theatre'

for worlds. On Saturday it was a little boy of five who had his leg

amputated, and now when you ask the white-faced darling where he's going

to he says he's going to the angels, and he'll get lots of gristly pork

up there. He \_is\_ too.

“The \_personnel\_ of our vineyard is abundant, but there are various sour

grapes growing about. We have a medical school (containing lots of nice

boys, only a girl may not speak to them even in the corridors), and a

full staff of honorary and visiting physicians and surgeons. But the

only doctor we really have much to do with is the house surgeon, a young

fellow who has just finished his student's course. His name is Abery,

and since Saturday he has so much respect for Glory that she might even

swear in his presence (in Manx), but Sister Allworthy takes care that

she doesn't, having designs on his celibacy herself. He must have sung

his \_Te Deum\_ after the operation, for he got gloriously drunk and

wanted to inject morphia in a patient recovering from trouble of the

kidney. It was an old hippopotamus of a German musician named Koenig,

and he was in a frantic terror. So I whispered to him to pretend to go

to sleep, and then I told the doctor I had lost the syringe. But--'Gough

bless me sowl!'--what a dressing the Sister gave me!

“Yesterday was visiting-day, and when the friends of the patients come

even an hospital can have its humours. They try to sneak in little

dainties which may be delicious in themselves, but are deadly poison

to the people they are intended for. Then we have to search under the

bedclothes of the patients, and even feel the pockets of their visitors.

The mother of my little boy came yesterday, and I noticed such a large

protuberance at her bosom under her ulster that I began to foresee

another operation. It was only a brick of currant cake, paved with

lemon peel. I hauled it out and moved round like a cloud of thunder and

lightning. But she began to cry and to say she had made it herself for

Johnnie, and then--well, didn't I just get a wigging from the Sister,

though!

“But I don't mind what happens here, for I am in London, and to be in

London is to live, and to live is to be in London. I've not seen much

of it yet, having only two hours off duty every day--from ten to

twelve--and then all I can do is to make little dips into the park and

the district round about, like a new pigeon with its wings clipped.

But I watch the great new world from my big box up here, and see the

carriages in the park and the people riding on horseback. They have

a new handshake in London. You lift your hand to the level of your

shoulder, and then waggle horizontally as if you had put your elbow out;

and when you begin to speak you say, 'I--er--' as if you had got the

mumps. But it is beautiful! The sound of the traffic is like music, and

I feel like a war-horse that wants to be marching to it. How delightful

it is to be young in a world so full of loveliness! And if you are not

very ugly it's none the worse.

“All hospital nurses are just now basking in the sunshine of a

forthcoming ball. It is to be given at Bartimaeus's Hospital, where they

have a lecture theatre larger than the common, and the dancing there is

for once to be to a happier tune. All the earth is to be present--all

the hospital earth--and if I could afford to array myself in the

necessary splendour, I should show this benighted London what an

absolute angel Glory is! But then my first full holiday is to be on the

24th, when I expect to be out from 10 A. M. until 10 P. M. I am nearly

crazy whenever I think of it, and when the time comes to make my first

plunge into London, I know I shall hold my breath exactly as if I were

taking a header off Creg Malin rocks.... Glory.”

VIII.

On the morning of the 24th Glory rose at five, that she might get

through her work and have the entire day for her holiday. At that hour

she came upon a rough-haired nurse wearing her cap a little on one side

and washing a floor with disinfectants. Being in great spirits, Glory

addressed her cheerfully.

“Are you off to-day too?” she said.

The nurse gave her a contemptuous glance and answered: “I'm not one of

your paying probationers, Miss--playing probationers \_I\_ call them. We

nurses are hard-working women, whose life spells duty; and we've got no

time for sight-seeing and holiday-making.”

“No, but you are one of those who ruin the profession altogether,” said

a younger woman who had just come up. “They will expect everybody to do

the same. This is my day off, but I have to do the grate, and sweep the

ward, and make the bed, and tidy the Sister's room--and it's all through

people like you. Small thanks you get for it either, for a girl may not

even wear her hair in a fringe, and she is always expecting to hear the

matron's 'You're not fit for nursing, Miss.'”

Glory looked at her. She was an exquisitely pretty girl, with dark hair,

pink and ivory cheeks, and light-gray eyes; but her hands were coarse,

and her finger nails flat and square, and when you looked again there

was a certain blemished appearance about her beauty as of a Sèvres vase

that is cracked somewhere.

“Do you say you are off to-day?” said Glory,

“Yes, I am; are you?”

“Yes, but I'm strange to London. Could you take me with you--if you are

going nowhere in particular?”

“Certainly, dear. I've noticed you before and wanted to speak to you.

You're the girl with the splendid name--Glory, isn't it?”

“Yes; what is yours?”

“Polly Love.”

At ten o'clock that morning the two girls set out for their long day's

jaunt.

“Now where shall we go?” said Polly.

“Let's go where we can see a great many people,” said Glory.

“That's easy enough, for this is the Queen's birthday, and----”

Glory thought of Aunt Rachel and made a cry of delight.

“And now that I think of it,” said Polly, as if by a sudden memory,

“I've got tickets for the trooping of the colours--the Queen's colours,

you know.”

“Shall we see her?” said Glory.

“What a question! Why, no, but we'll see the soldiers, and the generals,

and perhaps the Prince. It's at ten-thirty, and only across the park.”

“Come along,” said Glory, and she began to drag at her companion and to

run.

“My gracious, what a girl you are, to be sure!”

But they were both running in another minute, and laughing and

chattering like children escaped from school. In a quarter of an hour

they were at the entrance to the Horse Guards. There was a crowd at the

gates, and a policeman was taking tickets. Polly dived into her pocket.

“Where are mine? Oh, here they are. A great friend gave me them,” she

whispered. “He has a chum in one of those offices.”

“A gentleman,” said Glory with studied politeness; but they were

crushing through the gate by that time, and thereafter she had eyes and

ears for nothing but the pageant before her.

It was a beautiful morning, and the spring foliage of the park was

very green and fresh. Three sides of the great square were lined with

redcoats; the square itself was thronged with people, and every window

and balcony looking over it was filled. There were soldiers, sentries,

policemen, the generals in cocked hats, and the Prince himself in a

bearskin, riding by with the jingle of spurs and curb-chain. Then the

ta-ra-ta-ta-ra of the bugle, the explosive voice crying, “Escort for

the colour!” the officer carrying it, the white gloves of the staff

fluttering up the salute, the flash of bayonets, the march round, and

the band playing The British Grenadiers. It was like a dream to Glory.

She felt her bosom heaving, and was afraid she was going to cry.

Polly was laughing and prattling merrily. “Ha, ha, ha! see that soldier

chasing a sunshade? My! he has caught it with his sword.”

“I suppose these are all great people,” whispered Glory.

“I should think so,” said Polly. “Do you see that gentleman in the

window opposite?--that's the Foreign Office.”

“Which?” said Glory, but her eyes were wandering.

“The one in the frock-coat and the silk hat, talking to the lady in the

green lawn and the black lace fichu and the spring bonnet.”

“You mean beside that plain girl wearing the jungle of rhododendrons?”

“Yes; that's the gentleman that gave my friend the tickets.”

Glory looked at him for a moment, and something very remote seemed to

stir in her memory; but the band was playing once more, and she was

wafted away again. It was God save the Queen this time, and when it

ended and everybody cried “All over!” she took a long, deep breath and

said, “\_Well!\_”

Polly was laughing at her, and Glory had to laugh also. They set each

other off laughing, and people began to look at them, and then they had

to laugh again and run away.

“This Glory is the funniest girl,” said Polly; “she is surprised at the

simplest thing.”

They went to look at the shops, passing up Regent Street, across the

Circus and down Oxford Street toward the City, laughing and talking

nonsense all the time. Once when they made a little purchase at a shop

the shopwoman looked astonished at the freedom with which they carried

themselves, and after that they felt inclined to go into every shop in

the street and behave absurdly everywhere. In the course of two

hours they had accomplished all the innocent follies possible to the

intoxication of youth, and were perfectly happy.

By this time they had reached the Bank and were feeling the prickings

of hunger, so they looked out a restaurant in Cheapside and went in for

some dinner. The place was full of men, and several of them rose at

once when the two girls entered. They were in their out-door hospital

costume, but there was something showy about Polly's toilet, and the men

kept looking their way and smiling. Glory looked back boldly and said in

an audible voice, “What fun it must be to be a barmaid, and to have the

gentlemen wink at you, and be laughing back at them!” But Polly nudged,

her and told her to be quiet. She looked down herself, but nevertheless

contrived to use her eyes as a kind of furtive electric battery in the

midst of the most innocent conversation. It was clear that Polly had

flown farthest in the ways of the world, and when you looked at her

again you could see that the balance of her life had been deranged by

some one.

After dinner the girls got into an omnibus and went still farther east,

sitting at opposite sides of the car, and laughing and talking loudly to

each other, amid the astonishment of the other occupants. But when

they came to mean and ugly streets with green-grocers' barrows by the

curbstone, and weird and dreary cemeteries in the midst of gaunt, green

sticks that were trying to look like trees, Glory thought they had

better return.

They went back by the Thames steamboat from some landing stage among the

docks. The steamer picked up passengers at every station on the river,

and at London Bridge a band came aboard. As they sailed under St. Paul's

the boat was crowded with people going west to see the celebrations in

honour of the birthday, and the band was playing And her Golden Hair was

hanging down her Back.

At one moment Glory was wild with delight, and at the next her gaiety

seemed to be suddenly extinguished. The sun was setting behind the

towers of Westminster in a magnificent lake of fire, and it seemed

like the sun going down at Peel, except that the lights beneath, which

glistened and flashed, were windows, not waves, and the deep hum was not

the noise of the mighty sea, but the noise of mighty millions.

They landed at Westminster Bridge and went to a tearoom for tea. When

they came out it was quite dark, and they got on to the top of an

omnibus. But the town was now ablaze with gas and electric lights that

were flinging out the initials of the Queen, and Whitehall was dense

with carriages going to the official receptions. Glory wanted to be in

the midst of so much life, so the girls got down and walked arm in arm.

As they passed through Piccadilly Circus they were laughing again, for

the oppression of the crowds made them happy. The throng was greatest

at that point and they had to push their way through. Among others there

were many gaily-dressed women, who seemed to be waiting for omnibuses.

Glory noticed that two of these women, who were grimacing and lisping,

had spoken to a man who was also lounging about. She tugged at Polly's

arm.

“That's strange! Did you see that?” she said.

“That! Oh, that's nothing. It's done every day,” said Polly.

“What does it mean?” said Glory.

“Why, you don't mean to say--well, this, Glory---- Really your friends

ought to take care of you, my dear, you are so ignorant of the world.”

And then suddenly, as by a flash of lightning, Glory had her first

glimpse of the tragic issues of life.

“Oh, my gracious! Come along,” she whispered, and dragged Polly after

her.

They were panting past the end of St. James's Street when a man with

an eye-glass and a great shield of shirt-front collided with them and

saluted them. Glory was for forging ahead, but Polly had drawn up.

“It's only my friend,” said Polly in another voice.--“This is a new

nurse. Her name is Glory.”

The man said something about a glorious name and a glorious pleasure to

be nursed by such a nurse, and then both the girls laughed. He was glad

they had found his tickets useful, but sorry he could not see them

back to the hospital, being dragged away to the bally Foreign Office

reception in honour of the Queen's birthday.

“But I'm coming to the ball, you know, and,” with a glance at Glory,

“I've half a mind to bring my chum along with me!”

“Oh, do,” said Polly, partly covering the pupils of her eyes with her

eyelids.

The man lowered his voice and said something about Glory which Glory did

not catch, then waved his white-kid glove, saying “Ta-ta,” and was gone.

“Is he married?” said Glory.

“Married! Good gracious, no; what ridiculous ideas you've got!”

It was ten minutes after ten as the girls turned in at a sharp trot at

the door of the hospital, still prattling and chattering and bringing

some of the gaiety and nonsense of their holiday into the quiet

precincts of the house of pain. The porter shook his finger at them with

mock severity, and a ward Sister going through the porch in her white

silence stopped to say that a patient had been crying out for one of

them.

“It's me--I know it's me,” said Polly. “I've got a brother here out of

a monastery, and he can't do with anybody else about him. It makes me

tired of my life.”

But it was Glory who was wanted. The woman whom John Storm had picked

up out of the streets was dying. Glory had helped to nurse her, and the

poor old thing had kept herself alive that she might deliver to Glory

her last charge and message. She could see nobody, so Glory leaned over

the bed and spoke to her.

“I'm here, mammie; what is it?” she said, and the flushed young face

bent close above the withered and white one.

“He spoke to me friendly and squeedged my 'and, he did. S'elp me never,

it's true. Gimme a black cloth on the corfin, my dear, and mind yer tell

'im to foller.”

“Yes, mammie, yes. I will-be sure I--I--Oh!”

It was Glory's first death.

IX.

John Storm had been through his first morning call that afternoon. For

this ordeal he had presented himself in a flannel shirt in the hall,

where the canon was waiting for him in patent-leather boots and kid

gloves, and his daughter Felicity in cream silk and white feathers.

After they had seated themselves in the carriage the canon, said: “You

don't quite do yourself justice, Mr. Storm. Believe me, to be well

dressed is a great thing to a young man making his way in London.”

The carriage stopped at a house that seemed to be only round the corner.

“This is Mrs. Macrae's,” the canon whispered. “An American lady-widow

of a millionaire. Her daughter--you will see her presently--is to marry

into one of our best English families.”

They were walking up the wide staircase behind the footman in blue.

There was a buzz of voices coming from a room above.

“Canon--er--Wealthy, Miss Wealthy, and--er--the--h'm--Rev. Mr. Storm!”

The buzz of voices abated, and a bright-faced little woman, showily

dressed, came forward and welcomed them with a marked accent. There were

several other ladies in the room, but only one gentleman. This person,

who was standing, with teacup and saucer in hand, at the farther side,

screwed an eyeglass in his eye, looked across at John Storm, and then

said something to the lady in the chair beside him. The lady tittered

a little. John Storm looked back at the man, as if by an instinctive

certainty that he must know him when he saw him again. He was engulfed

in a high, stiff collar, and was rather ugly; tall, slender, a

little past thirty; fair, with soft, sleepy eyes, and no life in his

expression, but agreeable; fit for good society, with the stamp of good

breeding, and capable of saying little humorous things in a thin “roofy”

voice.

“I was real sorry I didn't hear Mr. Storm Wednesday evening,” Mrs.

Macrae was saying, with a mincing smile. “My daughter told me it was

just too lovely.--Mercy, this is your great preacher. Persuade him to

come to my 'At Home' Tuesday.”

A tall, dark girl, with gentle manners and a beautiful face, came slowly

forward, put her hand into John's, and looked steadily into his eyes

without speaking. Then the gentleman with the eyeglass said suavely,

“Have you been long in London, Mr. Storm?”

“Two weeks,” John answered shortly, and half turned his head.

“How--er--interesting!” with a prolonged drawl and a little cold titter.

“Oh, Lord Robert Ure--Mr. Storm,” said the hostess.

“Mr. Storm has done me the honour to become one of my assistant clergy,

Lord Robert,” said the canon, “but he is not likely to be a curate

long.”

“That is charming,” said Lord Robert. “It is always a relief to hear

that I am likely to have one candidate the less for my poor perpetual

curacy in Pimlico. They're at me like flies round a honey-pot, don't you

know. I thought I had made the acquaintance of all the perpetual curates

in Christendom. And what a sweet team they are, to be sure! The last of

them came yesterday. I was out, and my friend Drake--Drake of the Home

Office, you know--couldn't give the man the living, so he gave him

sixpence instead, and the creature went away quite satisfied.”

Everybody seemed to laugh except John, who only stared into the air, and

the loudest laughter came from the canon. But suddenly an incisive voice

said:

“But why sharpen your teeth on the poor curates? Is there no a canon or

a bishop handy that's better worth a bite?”

It was Mrs. Callender.

“I tell ye a story too, only \_mine\_ shall be a true one.”

“Jane! Jane!” said the hostess, shaking her fan as a weapon; and Lord

Robert stretched his neck over his collar and made an amiable smile.

“A girl of eighteen came to me this morning at Soho, and she was in the

usual trouble. The father was a wicked rector. He died last year

leaving thirty-one thousand pounds; and the mother of his unfortunate

child--that is to say, his mistress--is now in the Union.”

It was the first sincere word that had been spoken, where every tone

had been wrong, every gesture false, and it fell on the company like a

thunderclap. John Storm drew his breath hard, looked up at Lord Robert

by a strange impulse, and felt himself avenged.

“What a beautiful day it has been!” said somebody. Everybody looked up

at the maker of this surprising remark. It was a lady, and she blushed

until her cheeks burned again.

A painful silence followed, and then the hostess turned to Lord Robert

and said:

“You spoke of your friend Drake, didn't you? Everybody is talking of

him, and as for the girls, they seem to be crazy about the man. So

handsome, they say; so natural, and such a splendid talker. But then,

girls are so quick to take fancies to people. You really must take care

of yourself, my dear.” (This to Felicity.) “Who is he? Lord Robert will

tell you--an official of some kind, and son of Sir something Drake, of

one of the northern counties. He knows the secret of getting on in the

world, though he doesn't go about too much. But I've determined not to

live any longer without making the acquaintance of this wonderful being,

so Lord Robert must just bring him along Tuesday evening, or else----”

John Storm escaped at last, without promising to come to the “At Home.”

He went direct to the hospital and learned that Glory was out for the

day. Where she could have gone, and what she could be doing, puzzled him

grievously. That she had not put herself under his counsel and direction

on her first excursion abroad hurt his pride and wounded his sense of

responsibility. As the night fell his anxiety increased. Though he knew

she would not return until ten, he set out at nine to meet her.

At a venture he took the eastward course, and passed slowly down

Piccadilly. The façade of nearly every club facing the park was flaming

with electric light. Young men in evening dress were standing on the

steps, smoking and taking the air after dinner, and pretty girls in

showy costumes were promenading leisurely in front of them. Sometimes,

as a girl passed, she looked sharply up and the corner of her mouth

would be raised a little, and when she had gone by there would be a

general burst of laughter.

John's blood boiled, and then his heart sank; he felt so helpless, his

pity and indignation were so useless and unnecessary. All at once he saw

what he had been looking for. As he went by the corner of St. James's

Street he almost ran against Glory and another nurse in the costume of

their hospital. They did not observe him; they were talking to a man; it

was the man he had met in the afternoon--Lord Robert Ure.

John heard the man say, “Your Glory is such a glorious----” and then he

lowered his voice, and appeared to say something that was very amusing,

for the other girl laughed a great deal.

John's soul was now fairly in revolt, and he wanted to stop, to order

the man off and to take charge of the two nurses as his duty seemed to

require of him. But he passed them, then looked back and saw the group

separate, and as the man went by he watched the girls going westward.

There was a glimpse of them under the gas-lamp as they crossed the

street, and again a glimpse as they passed into the darkness under the

trees of the park.

He could not trust himself to return to the hospital that night, and

his indignation was no less in the morning. But there was a letter from

Glory saying that his poor old friend was dead, and had begged that he

would bury her. He dressed himself in his best (“We can't take liberties

with the poor,” he thought) and walked across to the hospital at once.

There he asked for Glory, and they went downstairs together to that

still chamber underground which has always its cold and silent occupant.

It is only a short tenancy that anybody can have there, so the old woman

had to be buried the same morning. The parish was to bury her, and the

van was at the door.

He was standing with Glory in the hall, and his heart had softened to

her.

“Glory,” he said, “you shouldn't have gone out yesterday without telling

me, the dangers of London are so great.”

“What dangers?” she asked.

“Well, to a young girl, a beautiful girl----”

Glory peered up under her long eyelashes.

“I mean the dangers from--I'm ashamed in my soul to say it--the dangers

from men.”

She shot up a quick glance into his face and said in a moment, “You saw

us, didn't you?”

“Yes, I saw you, and I didn't like your choice of company.”

She dropped her head demurely and said, “The man?”

John hesitated. “I was speaking of the girl. I don't like the freedom

with which she carries herself in this house. Among these good and

devoted women is there no one but this--this----?”

Glory's lower lip began to show its inner side. “She's bright and

lively, that's all I care.”

“But it's not all \_I\_ care, Glory, and if such men as that are her

friends outside----”

Glory's head went up. “What is it to me who are her friends outside?”

“Everything, if you allow yourself to meet them again.”

“Well,” doggedly, “I am going to meet them again. I'm going to the

Nurses' Ball on Tuesday.”

John answered with deliberation, “Not in that girl's company.”

“Why not?”

“I say \_not\_ in that girl's company.”

There was a short pause, and then Glory said with a quivering mouth:

“You are vexing me, and you will end by making me cry. Don't you see you

are degrading me too? I am not used to being degraded. You see me with

a weak silly creature who hasn't an idea in her head and can do nothing

but giggle and laugh and make eyes at men, and you think I'm going to be

led away by her. Do you suppose a girl can't take care of herself?”

“As you will, then,” said John, with a fling of his hand, going off down

the steps.

“Mr. Storm--Mr. Storm--Jo--Joh----”

But he was out on the pavement and getting into the workhouse van.

“Ah!” said a mincing voice beside her. “How jolly it is when anybody is

suffering for your sake!” It was Polly Love, and again her eyelids were

half covering her eyes.

“I'm sure I don't know what you mean,” said Glory. Her own eyes were

swimming in big tear-drops.

“Don't you? What a funny girl you are! But your education has been

neglected, my dear.”

It was a combination van and hearse with the coffin under the driver's

box, and John Storm (as the only discoverable mourner) with the

undertaker on the seat inside.

“Will ye be willin' ter tyke the service at the cimitery, sir?” said the

undertaker, and John answered that he would.

The grave was on the paupers' side, and when the undertaker, with his

man, had lowered the coffin to its place, he said, “They've gimme abart

three more funerals this morning, so I'll leave ye now, sir, to finish

'er off.”

At the next moment John Storm in his surplice was alone with the dead,

and had opened his book to read the burial service which no other human

ear was to hear.

He read “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes,” and then the bitter loneliness

of the pauper's doom came down on his soul and silenced him.

But his imprisoned passion had to find a vent, and that night he wrote

to the Prime Minister: “I begin to understand what you meant when you

said I was in the wrong place. Oh, this London, with its society, its

worldly clergy, its art, its literature, its luxury, its idle life,

all built on the toil of the country and compounded of the sweat of the

nameless poor! Oh, this 'Circe of cities,' drawing good people to it,

decoying them, seducing them, and then turning them into swine! It seems

impossible to live in the world and to be spiritually-minded. When I try

to do so I am torn in two.”

X.

On the following Tuesday evening two young men were dining in their

chambers in St. James's Street. One of them was Lord Robert Ure; the

other was his friend and housemate, Horatio Drake. Drake was younger

than Lord Robert by some seven or eight years, and also beyond

comparison more attractive. His face was manly and handsome, its

expression was open and breezy; he was broad-shouldered and splendidly

built, and he had the fair hair and blue eyes of a boy.

Their room was a large one, and it was full of beautiful and valuable

things, but the furniture was huddled about in disorder. A large

chamber-organ, a grand piano, a mandolin, and two violins, pictures

on the floor as well as on the walls, many photographs scattered

about everywhere, and the mirror over the mantelpiece fringed with

invitation-cards, which were stuck between the glass and the frame.

Their man had brought in the coffee and cigarettes. Lord Robert was

speaking in his weary drawl, which had the worn-out tone of a man who

had made a long journey and was very sleepy.

“Come, dear boy, make up your mind, and let us be off.”

“But I'm tired to death of these fashionable routs.”

“So am I.”

“They're so unnatural--so unnecessary.”

“My dear fellow, of course they're unnatural--of course they're

unnecessary; but what would you have?”

“Anything human and natural,” said Drake. “I don't care a ha'p'orth

about the morality of these things--not I--but I am dead sick of their

stupidity.”

Lord Robert made languid puffs of his cigarette, and said, in a tearful

drawl: “My dear Drake, of course it is exactly as you say. Who doesn't

know it is so? It has always been so and always will be. But what refuge

is there for the poor leisured people but these diversions which you

despise? And as for the poor titled classes--well, they manage to make

their play their business sometimes, don't you know. Confess that they

do sometimes, now, eh?”

Lord Robert was laughing with an awkward constraint, but Drake looked

frankly into his face and said:

“How's that matter going on, Robert?”

“Fairly, I think, though the girl is not very hot on it. The thing came

off last week, and when it was over I felt as if I had proposed to the

girl and been accepted by the mother, don't you know. I believe this

rout to-night is expressly in honour of the event, so I mustn't run away

from my bargain.”

He lay back, sent funnels of smoke to the ceiling, and then said, with

a laugh like a gurgle: “I'm not likely to, though. That eternal dun was

here again to-day. I had to tell him that the marriage would come off in

a year certain. That was the only understanding on which he would agree

to wait for his money. Bad? Of course it's bad; but what would you have,

dear boy?”

The men smoked in silence for a moment, and then Lord Robert said again:

“Come, old fellow, for friendship's sake, if nothing else. She's a

decent little woman, and dead bent on having you at her house to-night.

And if you're badly bored we'll not stay long. We'll come away early

and--listen--we'll slip across to the Nurses' Ball at Bartimaeus's

Hospital; there'll be fun enough there, at all events.”

“I'll go,” said Drake.

Half an hour later the two young men were driving up to the door of

Mrs. Macrae's house in Belgrave Square. There was a line of carriages

in front of it, and they had to wait their turn to approach the gate.

Footmen in gorgeous livery were ready to open the cab door, to help the

guests across the red baize that lay on the pavement, to usher them into

the hall, to lead them to the little marble chamber where they entered

their names in a list intended for the next day's \_Morning Post\_, and

finally to direct them to the great staircase where the general crush

moved slowly up to the saloon above.

In the well of the stairs, half hidden behind a little forest of palms

and ferns, a band in yellow and blue uniform sat playing the people in.

On the landing the hostess stood waiting to receive, and many of the

guests, by a rotary movement like the waters of a maelstrom, moved past

her in a rapid and babbling stream, twisted about her, and came down

again. She welcomed Lord Robert effusively, and motioned to him to stand

by her side. Then she introduced her daughter to Drake and sent them

adrift through the rooms.

The rooms were large ones with parquet flooring from which all furniture

had been removed, except the palms and ferns by the walls and the heavy

chandeliers overhead. It was not yet ten o'clock, but already the house

was crowded, and every moment there were floods of fresh arrivals.

First came statesmen and diplomatists, then people who had been to

the theatres, and toward the end of the evening some of the actors

themselves. The night was close and the atmosphere hot and oppressive.

At the farther end of the suite there was a refreshment-room with its

lantern lights pulled open; and there the crush was densest and the

commotion greatest. The click-clack of many voices cut the thick air

as with a thousand knives, and over the multitudinous clatter there was

always the unintelligible boom of the band downstairs.

Most of the guests looked tired. The men made some effort to be

cheerful, but the women were frankly jaded and fagged. Bedizened with

diamonds, coated with paint and powder, laden with rustling silks, they

looked weary and worn out. When spoken to they would struggle to smile,

but the smiles would break down after a moment into dismal looks of

misery and oppression.

“Had enough?” whispered Lord Robert to Drake.

Drake was satisfied, and Lord Robert began to make their excuses.

“Going already!” said Mrs. Macrae. “An official engagement, you

say?--Mr. Drake, is it? Oh, don't tell me! I know--\_I\_ know! Well,

you'll be married and settled one of these days--and then!”

They were in a hansom cab driving across London in the direction of

Bartimaeus's Hospital. Drake was bare-headed and fanning himself with

his crush hat. Lord Robert was lighting a cigarette.

“Pshaw! What a stifling den! Did you ever hear such a clitter-clatter?

A perfect Tower of Babel building company! What in the name of common

sense do people suppose they're doing by penning themselves up like that

on a night like this? What are they thinking about?”

“Thinking about, dear boy? You're unreasonable! Nobody wants to think

about anything in such scenes of charming folly.”

“But the women! Did you \_ever\_ see such faded, worn-out dummies for the

display of diamonds? Poor little women in their splendid misery! I was

sorry for your \_fiancée\_, Robert. She was the only woman in the house

without that hateful stamp of worldliness and affectation.”

“My dear Drake, you've learned many things, but there's one thing you

have not yet learned--you haven't learned how to take serious things

as trifles, and trifles as serious things. Learn it, my boy, or you'll

embitter existence. You are not going to alter the conditions of

civilization by any change in your own particular life; so just look out

the prettiest, wittiest, wealthiest little woman who is a dummy for the

display of diamonds----”

“Me? Not if I know it, old fellow! Give me a little nature and

simplicity, if it hasn't got a second gown to its back.”

“All right--as you like,” said Lord Robert, flinging out the end of his

cigarette. “You've got the pull of some of us--you can please yourself.

And here we are at old Bartimaeus's, and this is a very different pair

of shoes!”

They were driving out of one of London's main thoroughfares, through a

groined archway, into one of London's ancient buildings with its quiet

quadrangle where trees grow and birds sing. Every window of the square

was lighted up, and there was a low murmur of music being played

within.

“Listen!” said Lord Robert. “I am here ostensibly as the guest of the

visiting physician, don't you know, but really in the interests of the

little friend I told you of.”

“The one I got the tickets for last week?”

“Precisely.”

At the next moment they were in the ballroom. It was the lecture theatre

for the students of the hospital school--a building detached from the

wards and of circular shape, with a gallery round its walls, which were

festooned with flags and roofed with a glass dome. Some two hundred

girls and as many men were gathered there; the pit was their dancing

ring and the gallery was their withdrawing room. The men were nearly all

students of the medical schools; the girls were nearly all nurses, and

they wore their uniform: There was not one jaded face among them, not

one weary look or tired expression. They were in the fulness of youth

and the height of vigour. The girls laughed with the ring of joy, their

eyes sparkled with the light of happiness, their cheeks glowed with the

freshness of health.

The two men stood a moment and looked on.

“Well, what do you think of it?” said Lord Robert.

Drake's wide eyes were ablaze, and his voice came in gusts.

“Think of it!” he said. “It's wonderful! It's glorious!”

Lord Robert's glass had dropped from his eye, and he was laughing in his

drawling way.

“What are you laughing at? Women like these are at least natural, and

Nature can not be put on.”

The mazurka had just finished, and the dancers were breaking into

groups.

“Robert, tell me who is that girl over there--the one looking this way?

Is it your friend?”

Lord Robert readjusted his glass.

“The pretty dark girl with the pink-and-white cheeks, like a doll?”

“Yes; and the taller one beside her--all hair, and eyes, and bosom.

She's looking across now. I've seen that girl before somewhere. Now,

where have I seen her? Look at her--what fire, and life, and movement!

The dance is over, but she can't keep her feet still.”

“I see--I see. But let me introduce you to the matron and doctors first,

and then----”

“I know now--I know where I've seen her! Be quick, Robert, be quick!”

Lord Robert laughed again in his tired drawl. He was finding it very

amusing.

XI.

When Glory learned that all nurses eligible to attend the ball were to

wear hospital uniform, being on day duty she decided to go to it. But

then came John Storm's protest against the company of Polly Love, and

she felt half inclined to give it up. As often as she remembered his

remonstrance she was disturbed, and once or twice when alone she shed

tears of anger and vexation.

Meantime Polly was full of arrangements, and Glory found herself day by

day carried along in the stream of preparation. When the night came the

girls dressed in the same cubicle. Polly was prattling like a parrot,

but Glory was silent and almost sad.

By help of the curling tongs and a candle Polly did up her dark hair

into little knowing curls that went in and out on her temples and played

hide-and-seek around the pretty shells of her pink-and-white ears. Glory

was slashing the comb through her golden-red hair by way of preliminary

ploughing, when Polly cried: “Stop! Don't touch it any more, for

goodness' sake! It's perfect! Look at yourself now.”

Glory stood off from the looking glass and looked. “Am I really so

nice?” she thought; and then she remembered John Storm again, and had

half a mind to tear down her glorious curls and go straight away to bed.

She went to the ball instead, and, being there, she forgot all about

her misgivings. The light, the colour, the brilliance, the perfume

transported her to an enchanted world which she had never entered

before. She could not control her delight in it. Everything surprised

her, everything delighted her, everything amused her--she was the very

soul of girlish joy. The dark-brown spot on her eye shone out with a

coquettish light never seen in it until now, and the warble in her

voice was like the music of a happy bird. Her high spirits were

infectious--her lighthearted gaiety communicated itself to everybody.

The men who might not dance with her were smiling at the mere sight

of the sunshine in her face, and it was even whispered about that the

President of the College of Surgeons, who opened the ball, had said that

her proper place was not there--a girl like that young Irish nurse would

do honour to a higher assembly.

In that enchanted world of music and light and bright and happy faces

Glory lost all sense of time; but two hours had passed when Polly Love,

whose eyes had turned again and again to the door, tugged at her sleeve

and whispered: “They've come at last! There they are--there--directly

opposite to us. Keep your next dance, dear. They'll come across

presently.”

Glory looked where Polly had directed, and, seeing again the face she

had seen in the window of the Foreign Office, something remote and

elusive once more stirred in her memory. But it was gone in a moment,

and she was back in that world of wonders, when a voice which she

knew and yet did not know, like a voice that called to her as she was

awakening out of a sleep, said:

“Glory, don't you remember me? Have you forgotten me, Glory?”

It was her friend of the catechism class--her companion of the adventure

in the boat. Their hands met in a long hand-clasp with the gallop of

feeling that is too swift for thought.

“Ah, I thought you would recognise me! How delightful!” said Drake.

“And you knew me again?” said Glory.

“Instantly--at first sight almost.”

“Really! It's strange, though. Such a long, long time--ten years at

least! I must have changed since then.”

“You have,” said Drake; “you've changed very much.”

“Indeed now! Am I really so much changed for all? I've grown older, of

course.”

“Oh, terribly older,” said Drake.

“How wrong of me! But you have changed a good deal, too. You were only a

boy in jackets then.”

“And you were only a girl in short frocks.”

They both laughed, and then Drake said, “I'm so glad we've changed

together!”

“Are you?” said Glory.

“Why, yes,” said Drake; “for if you had changed and I hadn't----”

“But what nonsense we're talking!” said Glory; and they both laughed

again.

Then they told each other what had happened in that infinite cycle

of time which had spun round since they parted. Glory had not much to

narrate; her life had been empty. She had been in the Isle of Man all

along, had come to London only recently, and was now a probationer-nurse

at Martha's Vineyard. Drake had gone to Harrow and thence to Oxford,

and, being a man of artistic leanings, had wished to take up music, but

his father had seen no career in it; so he had submitted--he had entered

the subterranean catacombs of public life, and was secretary to one of

the Ministers. All this he talked of lightly, as became a young man of

the world to whom great things were of small account.

“Glory,” said Polly, at her elbow, “the waltz is going to begin.”

The band was preluding. Drake claimed the dance, and Glory was

astonished to find that she had it free (she had kept it expressly).

When the waltz was over he gave her his arm and led her into the

circular corridor to talk and to cool. His manners were perfect, and his

voice, so soft and yet so manly, increased the charm. In passing out of

the hot dancing room she threw her handkerchief over her head, and, with

the hand that was at liberty, held its ends under her chin. She wished

him to look at her and see what change this had made; so she said, quite

innocently:

“And now let me look at you again, sir!”

He recognised the dark-brown spot on her eye, and he could feel her arm

through her thin print dress.

“You've told me a good deal,” he said, “but you haven't said a syllable

about the most important thing of all.”

“And pray what is that?” said she.

“How many times have you fallen in love since I saw you last?”

“Good gracious, what a question!” said Glory.

His audacity was delightful. There was something so gracious and yet so

masterful about him.

“Do you remember the day you carried me off--eloped with me, you know?”

said Drake.

“I? How charming of me! But when was that, I wonder?” said Glory.

“Never mind; say, do you remember?”

“Well, if I do? What a pair of little geese we must have been in those

days!”

“I'm not so sure of that--\_now\_,'” said he.

“You didn't seem very keen about me \_then\_, as far as I can remember,”

said she.

“Didn't I?” said he. “What a silly young fool I must have been!”

They laughed again. She could not keep her arm still, and he could

almost feel its dimpled elbow.

“And do \_you\_ remember the gentleman who rescued us?” she said.

“You mean the tall, dark young man who kept hugging and kissing you in

the yacht?”

“Did he?”

“Do you forget that kind of thing, then?”

“It was very sweet of him. But he's in the Church now, and the chaplain

of our hospital.”

“What a funny little romantic world it is, to be sure!”

“Yes; it's like poetry, isn't it?” she answered.

Lord Robert came up to introduce Drake to Polly (who was not looking her

sweetest), and he claimed Glory for the next dance.

“So you knew my friend Drake before?” said Lord Robert.

“I knew him when he was a boy,” said Glory.

And then he began to sing his friend's praises--how he had taken a

brilliant degree at Oxford, and was now private secretary to the Home

Secretary, and would go into public life before long; how he could paint

and act, and might have made a reputation as a musician; how he went

into the best houses, and was a first-rate official; how, in short, he

had the promised land before him, and was just on the eve of entering

it.

“Then I suppose you know he is rich--enormously rich?” said Lord Robert.

“Is he?” said Glory, and something great and grand seemed to shimmer a

long way off.

“Enormously,” said Sir Robert; “and yet a man of the most democratic

opinions.”

“Really?” said Glory.

“Yes,” said Lord Robert; “and all the way down in the hansom he has been

trying to show me how impossible it is for him to marry a lady.”

“Now why did you tell me that I wonder?” said Glory, and Lord Robert

began to fidget with his eye-glass.

Drake returned with Polly. He proposed that they should take the air in

the quadrangle, and they went off for that purpose, the girls arm-in-arm

some paces ahead.

“There's a dash of Satan himself in that red-headed girl,” said Lord

Robert. “She understands a man before he understands himself.”

“She's as natural as Nature,” said Drake. “And what lips--what a mouth!”

“Irish, isn't she? Oh, Manx! What's Manx, I wonder?”

The night was very warm and close, and there was hardly more air in the

courtyard. The sound of the band came to them there, and Glory, who

had danced with nearly everybody within, must needs dance by herself

without, because the music was more sweet and subdued out there, and

dancing in the darkness was like a dream.

“Come and sit down on the seat, Glory,” said Polly fretfully; “you are

getting on my nerves, dear.”

“Glory,” said Drake, “how do the Londoners strike you?”

“Much like other mortals,” said Glory; “no better, no worse--only

funnier.”

The men laughed at that description, and Glory proceeded to give

imitations of London manners--the high handshake, the “Ha-ha” of the

mumps, the mouthing of the canon, and the mincing of Mr. Golightly.

Drake bellowed with delight; Lord Robert drawled out a long owlish

laugh; Polly Love said spitefully, “You might give us your friend, the

new curate, next, dearest,” and then Glory went down like a shot.

“Really,” began Drake, “it's not hospital nursing, you know----”

But there were low murmurings of thunder and some large splashes of

rain, and they returned to the ballroom. The doctors and the matrons

were gone by this time; only the nurses and the students remained,

and the fun was becoming furious. One young student was pulling down a

girl's hair, and another was waltzing with his partner carried bodily in

his arms. Somebody lowered the lights, and they danced in a shadow-land;

somebody began to sing, and they all sang in chorus; then somebody began

to fling about paper bags full of tiny white wafers, and the bags

burst in the air like shells, and their contents fell like stars from a

falling rocket, and everybody was covered as with flakes of snow.

Meantime the storm had broken, and above the clash and clang of the

instruments of the band and the rhythmic shuffle of the feet of the

dancers and the clear, joyous notes of their happy singing, there was

the roar of the thunder that rolled over London, and the rattle of the

rain on the glass dome overhead.

Glory was in ecstasies; it was like a mist on Peel Bay at night with the

moon shining through it and the waves dancing to a northwest breeze. It

was like a black and stormy sea outside Contrary, with the gale

coming down from the mountains. And yet it was a world of wonder and

enchantment and beauty, and bright and happy faces.

It was morning when the ball broke up, and then the rain had abated,

though the thunder was still rumbling. The men were to see the girls

back to the hospital, and Glory and Drake sat in a hansom-cab together.

“So you always forget that kind of thing, do you?” he said.

“What kind of thing?” she asked.

“Never mind; \_you\_ know!”

She had put up the hood of her outdoor cape, but he could still see the

gleam of her golden hair.

“Give me that rose,” he said; “the white one that you put in your hair.”

“It's nothing,” she answered.

“Then give it to me. I'll keep it forever and ever.”

She put up her hand to her head.

“Ah! how sweet of you! And what a lovely little hand! But no; let me

take it for myself.”

He reached one arm around her shoulder, put his hand under her chin,

tipped up her face, and kissed her on the lips.

“Darling!” he whispered.

Then in a moment she awoke from her world of wonder and enchantment, and

the intoxication of the evening left her. She did not speak; her head

dropped; she felt her cheeks burn red, and she hid her face in her

hands. There was a momentary sense of dishonour, almost of outrage.

Drake treated her lightly, and she was herself to blame.

“Forgive me, Glory!” he was saying, in a voice tremulous and intense.

“It shall never happen again--never--so help me God!”

The day was dawning, and the last raindrops were splashing on the wet

and empty pavement. The great city lay asleep, and the distant thunder

was rolling away from it.

XII.

The chaplain of Martha's Vineyard had not been to the hospital ball.

Before it came off he had thought of it a good deal, and as often as he

remembered that he had protested to Glory against the company of Polly

Love he felt hot and ashamed. Polly was shallow and frivolous, and had a

little crab-apple of a heart, but he knew no harm of her. It was hardly

manly to make a dead set at the little thing because she was foolish and

fond of dress, and because she knew a man who displeased him.

Then she was Glory's only companion, and to protest against Glory going

in her company was to protest against Glory going at all. That seemed a

selfish thing to do. Why should he deny her the delights of the ball?

He could not go to it himself--he would not if he could; but girls liked

such things--they loved to dance, and to be looked at and admired, and

have men about them paying court and talking nonsense.

There was a sting in that thought, too; but he struggled to be

magnanimous. He was above all mean and unmanly feelings--he would

withdraw his objection.

He did not withdraw it. Some evil spirit whispered in his heart that

Glory was drifting away from him. This was the time to see for certain

whether she had passed out of the range of his influence. If she

respected his authority she would not go. If she went, he had lost his

hold of her, and their old relations were at an end.

On the night of the ball he walked over to the hospital and asked for

her. She had gone, and it seemed as if the earth itself had given way

beneath his feet.

He could not help feeling bitterly about Polly Love, and that caused

him to remember a patient to whom her selfish little heart had shown no

kindness. It was her brother. He was some nine or ten years older,

and very different in character. His face was pale and thin--almost

ascetic--and he had the fiery and watery eyes of the devotee. He had

broken a blood-vessel and was threatened with consumption, but his

case was not considered dangerous. When Polly was about, his eyes would

follow her round the ward with something of the humble entreaty of a

dog. It was clear that he loved his sister, and was constantly thinking

of her. But she hardly ever looked in his direction, and when she spoke

to him it was in a cold or fretful voice.

John Storm had observed this. It had brought him close to the young

man, and the starved and silent heart had opened out to him. He was a

lay-brother in an Anglican Brotherhood that was settled in Bishopsgate

Street. His monastic name was Brother Paul. He had asked to be sent to

that hospital because his sister was a nurse there. She was his only

remaining relative. One other sister he had once had, but she was

gone--she was dead--she died---- But that was a sad and terrible story;

he did not like to talk of it.

To this broken and bankrupt creature John Storm found his footsteps

turning on that night when his own heart lay waste. But on entering the

ward he saw that Brother Paul had a visitor already. He was an elderly

man in a strange habit--a black cassock which buttoned close at the neck

and fell nearly to his feet, and was girded about the waist by a black

rope that had three great knots at its suspended ends. And the habit

was not more different from the habit of the world than the face of the

wearer was unlike the worldly face. It was a face full of spirituality,

a face that seemed to invest everything it looked upon with a holy

peace--a beautiful face, without guile or craft or passion, yet not

without the signs of internal strife at the temples and under the eyes;

but the battles with self had all been fought and won.

As John Storm stepped up, the old man rose from his chair by the

patient's bed.

“This is the Father Superior, sir,” said Brother Paul.

“I've just been hearing of you,” said the Father in a gentle voice. “You

have been good to my poor brother.”

John Storm answered with some commonplace--it had been a pleasure,

a happiness; the brother would soon leave them; they would all miss

him--perhaps himself especially.

The Father resumed his chair and listened with an earnest smile. “I

understand you, dear friend,” he said. “It is so much more blessed to

give than to receive! Ah, if the poor blind world only knew! How it

fights for its pleasures that perish, and its pride of life that passes

away! Yet to succour a weaker brother, or protect a fallen woman, or

feed a little child will bring a greater joy than to conquer all the

kingdoms of the earth.”

John Storm sat down on the end of the bed. Something had gone out to

him in a moment, and he was held as by a spell. The Father talked of the

love of the world--how strange it was, how difficult to understand, how

tragic, how pitiful! The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye--how

mean, how delusive, how treacherous! To think of the people of that

mighty city day by day and night by night making themselves miserable in

order that they might make themselves merry; to think of the children

of men scouring the globe for its paltry possessions, that could not add

one inch to the stature of the soul, while all the time the empire of

peace and joy and happiness lay here at hand, here within ourselves,

here in the little narrow compass of the human heart! To give, not to

get, that was the great blessedness, and to give of yourself, of your

heart's love, was the greatest blessedness of all.

John Storm was stirred. “The Church, sir,” he said, “the Church itself

has to learn that lesson.”

And then he spoke of the hopes with which he had come up to London,

and how they were being broken down and destroyed; of his dreams of the

Church and its mission, and how they were dying or dead already.

“What liars we are, sir! How we colour things to justify ourselves! Look

at our sacraments--are they a lie, or are they a sacrilege? Look at

our charities--are we Pharisees or are we hypocrites? And our clergy,

sir--our fashionable clergy! Surely some tremendous upheaval will shake

to its foundations the Church wherein such things are possible--a Church

that is more worldly than the world! And then the woman-life of the

Church, see how it is thrown away. That sweetest and tenderest and

holiest power, how it goes to waste under the eye and with the sanction

of the Church in the frivolities of fashion--in drawing-rooms, in

gardens, in bazars, in theatres, in balls----”

He stopped. His last word had arrested him. Had he been thinking only

of himself and of Glory? His head fell and he covered his face with his

hand.

“You are right, my son,” said the Father quietly, “and yet you are

wrong, too. The Church of God will not be shaken to its foundations

because of the Pharisees who stand in its public places, or because

of the publicans who haunt its purlieus. Though the axe be laid to the

rotten tree, yet the little seed will save its kind alive.”

Then with an earnest smile and in a gentle voice he spoke of their

little brotherhood in Bishopsgate Street; how ten years ago they had

founded it for detachment from earthly cares and earthly aims, and for

hiddenness with God; how they had established it in the midst of the

world's, busiest highway, in the heart of the world's greatest market,

to show that they despised gold and silver and all that the blind and

cheated world most prizes, just as St. Philip and St. Ignatius had

established the severest of modern rules in a profane and self-indulgent

century, to show that they could stamp out every suggestion of the flesh

as a spark from the fires of hell.

And then he lifted his cord and pointed to the knots at the end of it,

and told what they were--symbols of the three bonds by which he was

bound--the three vows he had taken: the vow of poverty, because Christ

chose it for himself and his friends; the vow of obedience, because he

had said, “He that heareth you heareth Me”; and the vow of chastity,

because it was our duty to guard the gates of the senses, and to keep

our eyes and ears and tongue from all inordinateness.

“But the lawful love of home and kindred,” said John; “what of that?”

“We convert it into what is spiritual,” said the Father. “All human

love must be based on the love of God if it is to be firm and true

and enduring, and the reason of so much failure of love in natural

friendship is that the love of the creature is not built upon the love

of the Creator.”

“But the love--say of mother and son--of brother and sister?”

“Ah, we have placed ourselves above the ordinary conditions of life

that none may claim our affections in the same way as Christ. Man has

to contend with two sets of enemies--those from within and those from

without; and no temptations are more subtle than those which come in the

name of our holiest affections. But the sword of the spirit must keep

the tempter away. There is the Judas in all of us, and he will betray us

with a kiss if he can.”

John Storm's breast was heaving. He could scarcely conceal his

agitation; but the Father had risen to go.

“It is eight o'clock, and I must be back to Compline,” he said. And

then he laughed and added: “We never ride in cabs; but I must needs walk

across the park to-night, for I have given away all my money.”

At that the smile of an angel came into his old face, and lie said, with

a sweet simplicity:

“I love the park. Every morning the children play there, and then it is

the holy Catholic Church to me, and I like to walk in it and to lay my

hands on the heads of the little ones, and to ask a blessing for them,

and to empty my-self. This morning as I was coming here I met a little

boy carrying a bundle. 'And what is \_your\_ name, my little man?' I said,

and he told me what it was. 'And how old are you?' I asked. 'Twelve

years,' he answered. 'And what have you got in your bundle?' 'Father's

dinner, sir,' he said. 'And what is your father, my son?' 'A carpenter,'

said the boy. And I thought if I had been living in Palestine nineteen

hundred years ago I might have met another little Boy carrying the

dinner of his father, who was also a carpenter, in a little bundle which

Mary had made up for him. So I felt in my pocket, and all I had was my

fare home again, and I gave it to the little man as a thank-offering to

God that he had suffered me to meet a sweet boy of twelve whose father

was a carpenter.”

John Storm's eyes were dim with tears.

“Good-bye, Brother Paul, and God send you back to us soon!--Good-bye to

you, dear friend; and when the world deals harshly with you come to

us for a few days in Retreat, that in the silence of your soul you may

forget its vanities and vexations and fix your thoughts above.”

John Storm could not resist the impulse--he dropped to his knees at the

Father's feet.

“Bless me also, Father, as you blessed the carpenter's boy.”

The Father raised two fingers of his right hand and said:

“God bless you, my son, and be with you and strengthen you, and when he

smiles on you may the frown of man affect you not!--Father in heaven,

look down on this fiery soul and succour him! Help him to cast off every

anchor that holds him to the world, and make him as a voice crying in

the wilderness, 'Come out of her, my people, saith our God.'”

When John rose from his knees the saintly face was gone, and all the air

seemed to be filled with a heavenly calm.

While he had been kneeling for the Father's blessing he had been

aware of a step on the floor behind him. It was his fellow-curate, the

Reverend Golightly, who was still waiting to deliver his message.

The canon had been disappointed in one of his preachers for Sunday, and

being himself engaged to preside over the annual dinner of a dramatic

benevolent fund to be held on the Saturday night, and therefore

incapable of extra preparation, he desired that Mr. Storm should take

the sermon on Sunday morning.

John promised to do so; and then his fellow-curate smiled, bowed,

coughed, and left him. A small room was kept for the chaplain on the

ground floor of the hospital, and he went down to it and wrote a letter.

It was to the parson at Peel.

“No doubt you hear from Glory frequently, and know all about her

progress as a probationer. She seems to be very well, and certainly I

have never seen her look so bright and so cheerful. At the moment of

writing she is out at a ball given by some of the hospital authorities.

Well, it is a perfectly harmless source of pleasure, and with all my

heart I hope she is enjoying herself. No doubt some form of amusement

is necessary to a young girl in the height of her youth and health

and beauty, and he would be only a poor sapless man who could not take

delight in the thought that a good girl was happy. Her fellow-nurses,

too, are noble and devoted women, doing true woman's work, and if there

are some black sheep among them, that is no more than might be expected

of the purest profession in the world.

“As for myself, I have tried to carry out-my undertaking to look after

Glory, but I can not say how long I may be able to continue the task.

Do not be surprised if I am compelled to give it up. You know I am

dissatisfied with my present surroundings, and I am only waiting for the

ruling and direction of the pillar of cloud and fire. God alone can tell

how it will move, but God will guide me. I don't go out more than I can

help, and when I do go I get humiliated and feel foolish. The life of

London has been a great and painful surprise. I had supposed that I knew

all about it, but I have really known nothing until now. Its cruelty,

its deceit, and its treachery are terrible. London is the Judas that

is forever betraying with a kiss the young, the hopeful, the innocent.

However, it helps one to know one's self, and that is better than

lying wrapped in cotton wool. Give my kindest greetings to everybody at

Glenfaba--my love to my father, too, if there are any means of conveying

it.”

The letter took him long to write, and when it was written he went out

into the hall to post it. There he saw that a thunderstorm was coming,

and he concluded to remain until it had passed over. He stepped into the

library and selected a book, and returned to his room to read it. The

book was St. John Chrysostom on the Priesthood, and the subject was

congenial, but he could not keep his mind on the printed page:

He thought of the Father Superior, of the little brotherhood in

Bishopsgate, and then of Glory at the hospital ball, and again of Glory,

and yet again and again of Glory. Do what he would, he could not help

but think of her.

The storm pealed over his head, and when he returned to the hall two

hours later it was still far from spent. He stood at the open door and

watched it. Forks of lightning lit up the park, and floods of black rain

made the vacant pavements like the surface of the sea. A tinkling cab

slid past at intervals, with its driver sheeted in oilskins, and now and

then there was an omnibus, full within and empty without. Only one other

living thing was to be seen anywhere. An Italian organ-man had stationed

himself in front of a mansion to the left and was playing vigorously.

John Storm walked through the hospital. It was now late, and the house

was quiet. The house-doctor had made the last of his rounds and turned

into his chambers across the courtyard, and the night-nurses were

boiling little kettles in their rooms between the wards. The surgical

wards were darkened, and the patients were asleep already. In the

medical wards there were screens about certain of the beds, and weary

moans came from behind them.

It was after midnight when John Storm came round to the hall again, and

then the rain had ceased, but the thunder was still rumbling. He might

have gone home at length, but he did not go; he realized that he was

waiting for Glory. Other nurses returned from the ball, and bowed to him

and passed into the house. He stepped into the porter's lodge, and sat

down and watched the lightning. It began to be terrible to him, because

it seemed to be symbolical. What doom or what disaster did this storm

typify and predict? Never could he forget the night on which it befell.

It was the night of the Nurses' Ball.

He thought he must have slept, for he shook himself and thought: “What

nonsense! Surely the soul leaves the body while we are asleep, and only

the animal remains!”

It was now almost daylight, and two hansom-cabs had stopped before

the portico, and several persons who were coming up the steps were

chattering away like wakened linnets. One voice was saying:

“Mr. Drake proposes that we should all go to the theatre, and if we can

get a late pass I should like it above everything.” It was Glory, and a

fretful voice answered her:

“Very well, if \_you\_ say so. It's all the same to \_me\_.” It was Polly;

and then a man's voice said:

“What night shall it be, then, Robert?”

And a second man's voice answered, with a drawl, “Better let the girls

choose for themselves, don't you know.”

John Storm felt his hands and feet grow cold, and he stepped out into

the porch. Glory saw him coming and made a faint cry of recognition.

“Ah, here is Mr. Storm! Mr. Storm, you should know Mr. Drake. He was in

the Isle of Man, you remember----”

“I do \_not\_ remember,” said John Storm.

“But you saved his life, and you ought to know him----”

“I do \_not\_ know him,” said John Storm.

She was beginning to say, “Let me introduce----” But she stopped

and stood silent for a moment, while the strange light came into her

gleaming eyes of something no word could express, and then she burst

into noisy laughter.

A superintendent Sister going through the hall at the moment drew up and

said, “Nurse, I am surprised at you! Go to your rooms this instant!” and

the girls whispered their adieus and went off giggling.

“What a glorious night it has been!” said Glory, going upstairs.

“I'm glad you think so,” said Polly. “To tell you the truth, I found it

dreadfully tiresome.”

The two men lit their cigarettes and got back into one of the hansoms

and drove away.

“What a bear that man is!” said Lord Robert.

“Rude enough, certainly,” said Drake; “but I liked his face for all

that; and if the Fates put it into his head to stand between me and

death--well, I'm not going to forget it.”

“Give him a wide berth, dear boy. The fellow is an actor--an affected

fop. I met him at Mrs. Macrae's on Thursday. He is a religious actor and

a poseur. He'll do something one of these days, take my word for it.”

And meanwhile John Storm had buttoned his long coat up to his throat and

was striding home through the echoing streets, with both hands clinched

and his teeth set hard.

XIII.

“Martha's.

“Oh, Lord-a-massy! Oh, Gough bless me sowl! Oh, my beloved grandfather!

John Storm has done for himself at last! That man was never an author

of peace and a lover of concord; but, my gracious, if you had heard his

sermon in church on Sunday morning! Being a holy and humble woman of

heart myself, I altered the Litany the smallest taste possible, and

muttered away from beginning to end, 'O Lord, close thou our lips'; but

the Lord didn't heed me in the least, with the result that everybody on

earth is now screaming and snarling at our poor Mr. Storm exactly as if

he had been picking the pockets of the universe.

“It was all about the morality of men. The text was as innocent as a

baby: 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the

flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' And when he began in the usual way,

the dear old goodies in glasses thought he had been wound up like

the musical box and had just turned on the crank, so they cuddled in

comfortably for forty winks before the anthem. There were two natures

in man, and man's body might be good or bad according as spiritual

or carnal affections swayed it, and all the rest of the good old

change-for-sixpence-and-a-ha'penny-out, you know. But the lesson had

been from Isaiah, where the unreasonable old prophet is indignant with

the ladies of Zion because they don't want to look like dowdies, you

remember: 'Tremble, ye women that are at ease, strip you and make you

bare and gird sackcloth upon your loins.' And off he went like a comet,

with the fashionable woman for his tail. If matrimony nowadays didn't

always mean monogamy, who was chiefly to blame? Men were generally as

pure as women required that they should be; and if the lives of men were

bad it was often because women did not demand that they should be

good. Tremble, ye women, that are at ease, and say why you allow your

daughters to marry men who in fact and effect are married already. Strip

you, and be ashamed for the poor women who were the first wives of your

daughters' husbands, and for the children whom such men abandon and

forget! In leading your innocent daughters to courts and receptions

you are only leading them to the auction-room; and in dressing and

decorating them you are preparing them for the market of base men. Last

week some titled philanthropist had hauled up a woman in the East End

of London for attempting to sell her daughter. How shocking! everybody

said. What a disgrace to the nineteenth century! But the wretched

creature had only been doing the best according to her light for the

welfare of her miserable child; while here--with their eyes open, with

their cultured consciences--the wives of these same philanthropists were

doing the same thing every day--the very same!

“Having gone for the mammies like this, he went for the dear girls

themselves one better. Let them gird sackcloth on their loins and hide

their faces. Why did they suffer themselves to be sold? The woman who

married a man for the sake of his title or his position or any worldly

advantage whatever was no better than an outcast of the streets. Her act

was the same, and in all reason and justice her name should be the same

also.

“Hey, nonny, nonny! I told you how he broke down before; but on Sunday

morning, in spite of mine own amended Litany, I had just as much hope of

the breakdown of the Falls of Niagara, or a nineteen-feet spring tide.

You would have said his face was afire, and those great eyes of his were

lit up like the red lamps on Peel pier.

“Pulpit oratory! I don't know what it is, only I never heard the like

of it in all my born days. I begin to think the real difference between

preachers is the difference of the fire beneath the crust. In some it

burns so low that it doesn't even warm the surface, and you couldn't get

up enough puff to boil the kitchen kettle; but in others--look out! It's

a volcano, and the lava is coming down with a rush.

“Mercy me, how I cried! 'Oh, my daughter, oh, my child, what a ninny you

are!' I told myself; but it was no use talking. His voice was as hoarse

as a raven's, and sometimes you would have thought his very heart was

breaking.

“But the congregation! You should have seen the transformation scene!

They had come in bowing and smiling and whispering softly until the

church was a perfect sheet of sunshine, an absolute aurora borealis; but

they went out like a northeast gale, with mutterings of thunder and one

man overboard.

“And John Storm having put his foot in it, of course Glory Quayle had

to get her toe in too. Coming down the aisle some of the dear ladies

of Zion, who looked as if they wanted to 'swear in their wrath,' were

mumbling all the lamentations of Jeremiah. Who was he, indeed, to talk

to people like that? Nobody had ever heard of him except his mother.

And in the porch they came upon a fat old dump in a velvet dollman

who declared it was perfectly scandalous, and she had come out in the

middle. Whereupon Glory, not being delivered that day from all evil and

mischief, said, 'Quite right, ma'am, and you were not the only one who

had to leave the church in the middle of that sermon.' 'Why, who else

had to go?' said this female Pharisee. 'The devil, ma'am!' said Glory,

and then left her with that bone to gnaw.

“It turns out that the old girlie in the dollman is a mighty patron of

this hospital, so everybody says I am in for nasty weather. But hoot!

My heart's in the Hielan's, my heart is not here; my heart's in the

Hielan's, sae what can I fear!

“John Storm is in for it too, and they say his vicar waited for him

in the vestry, but he looked like forked lightning coming out of the

pulpit, so the good man thought it better to keep his rod in pickle

awhile. It seems that the Lords of the Council and all the nobility were

there, and it is a point of religious etiquette in London that in the

hangman's house nobody speaks of the rope; but our poor John gave them

the gibbet as well. It was a fearful thing to do, but nobody will make

me believe he had not got his reasons. He hasn't been here since, but

I am certain he has his eye on some fine folks, and, whoever they are,

I'll bet 'my bottom dollar' they deserved all they got.

“But heigho! I haven't left myself breath to tell you about the ball. I

was there! You remember I was lamenting that I hadn't got the necessary

finery. In fact, I had put in a bit at the end of my prayers about it.

'O God, be good to me this once and let me look nice.' And he \_was\_. He

put it into the heads of the nabobs of this vineyard that nurses should

'appear at the Nurses' Ball in regulation uniform only.' So my cloak and

my bonnet and my gray dress and my apron covered a multitude of sins.

“You should have seen Glory that night, grandfather. She was a redder

young lobster than ever somehow, but she put a white rose in her carroty

curls, and, Gough bless me, what a bogh [\* Dear] she was, though! Of

course, she made the acquaintance of the 'higher ranks of society,' and

danced with all the earth. The great surgeon of something opened the

ball with the matron of Bartimaeus's, and she went round on his arm like

a dolly in a dolly-tub; but he soon saw what a marvellous and miraculous

being Glory was, and after I had waltzed so beautifully with the ancient

personage I had the hearts of all the young men flying round at the hem

of my white petticoat--it was a nice new one for the occasion.

“But the strangest thing was that somebody from the Isle of Man flopped

down on me there just as if he had descended from the blue. It was that

little English boy Drake, who used to come to the catechism class, only

now he is one of the smartest and handsomest young men in London. When

he came up and announced himself I am sure he expected me to expire on

the spot or else go crazy, and of course I was trembling all over, but

I behaved like a rational person and stood my ground. He looked at me as

much as to say, 'Do you know you've grown to be a very fine young woman,

and I admire you very much?' Whereupon I looked back as much as to

reply, 'That's quite right, my dear young sir, and I should have a poor

opinion of you if you didn't.' So, being of the same opinion on the only

subject worth thinking about (that's me), I behaved charmingly to him,

and even forgave him when he carried off my white rose at the end.

“Mr. Drake has a friend who is always with him. He is a willowy person

who owns sixteen setters and three church livings, they say, and wears

(on week days) a thunder-and-lightning suit of clothes--\_you\_ know, a

pattern so large that one man can't carry the whole of it and somebody

else goes about with the rest. His name is Lord Robert Ure, and I intend

to call him Lord Bob, for, since he is such a frivolous person himself,

I must make a point of being severe. I danced with him, of course, and

he kept telling me what a wonderful future Mr. Drake had, and how the

Promised Land was before him, and even hinting that it wouldn't be a bad

thing to be Mrs. Joshua. Fancy Glory making a tremendous match with a

leader of society! And if I hadn't gone to that hospital ball no doubt

the history of the nineteenth century would have been different!

“They are going to take me next week to something far, far better than a

ball, only I must not tell you anything about it yet, except that I

keep awake all night sometimes to think of it. But thou sure and firmest

earth, hear not my steps which way they walk!

“It's late, and I'm just going to cuddle in. Good-night! My kisses for

the aunties, and my love to everybody! In fact, you can serve out my

love in ladles this time--being cheap at present, and plenty more where

this is coming from.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you what happened when we returned to the

hospital! It was shockingly late, and the gentlemen had brought us back,

but there was our John Storm with his sad and anxious face waiting up to

see us safely home. He was angry with me, and I didn't mind that in the

least; but when I saw that he liked me well enough to be rude to the

gentlemen I fell a victim to the crafts and assaults of the devil, and

couldn't help laughing out loud; and then Ward Sister Allworthy came

along and lifted her lip and showed me her tusk.

“It was a wonderful night altogether, and I was never so happy in my

life, but all the same I had a good cry to myself alone before going to

bed. Too much water hadst thou, poor Ophelia! Talk about two natures in

one; I've got two hundred and fifty, and they all want to do different

things! Ah me! the 'ould Book' says that woman was taken out of the

rib of a man, and I feel sometimes as if I want to get back to my old

quarters. Glory.

“P.S.--I'll write you a full and particular account of the great event

of next week after it is over. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest

chuck, till thou applaud the deed. You see I don't want you to eat your

meal in fear--or your porridge either. But I am burning with impatience

for the night to come, and would like to run to it. Oh, if it were done,

when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly! See? I am going

in for a course of Shakespeare!”

XIV.

A week later Glory made her first visit to the theatre. Her companions

were Drake, who was charmed with her \_naïveté\_; Lord Robert, who was

amused by it; and Polly Love, who was annoyed and ashamed, and uttered

little peevish exclamations.

As they entered the box which they were to occupy, the attendant drew

back the curtain, and at sight of the auditorium she cried, “Oh!” and

then checked herself and coloured deeply. With her eyes down she sat

where directed in one of the three seats in front, Polly being on her

right and Drake on her left, and Lord Robert at the back of the lace

curtain. For some minutes she did not smile or stir, and when she spoke

it was always in whispers. A great awe seemed to have fallen upon her,

and she was behaving as she behaved in church.

Drake began to explain the features of the theatre. Down there were

the stalls, and behind the stalls was the pit. The body? Well, yes--the

body, so to speak. And the three galleries were the dress circle, the

family circle, and the gallery proper. The organ loft? No, there was no

organ, but that empty place below was the well for the orchestra.

“And what is this little vestry?” she said.

“Oh, this is a private box where we can sit by ourselves and talk!” said

Drake.

At every other explanation she had made little whispered cries of

astonishment and delight; but when she heard that conversation was not

forbidden she was entirely happy. She thought a theatre was even more

beautiful than a church, and supposed an actor must have a wonderful

living.

The house was filling rapidly, and as the people entered she watched

them intently.

“What a beautiful congregation!” she whispered--“audience, I mean!”

“Do you think so?” said Polly; but Glory did not hear her.

It was delightful to see so many lovely faces and listen to the low hum

of their conversation. She felt happy among them already and quite kind

to everybody, because they had all come together to enjoy themselves.

Presently she bowed to some one in the stall with a face all smiles, and

then said to Polly:

“How nice of her! A lady moved, to me from the body. How friendly they

are in theatres!”

“But it was to Mr. Drake,” said Polly; and then Glory could have buried

her face in her confusion.

“Never mind, Glory,” said Drake; “that's a lady who will like you the

better for the little mistake.--Rosa,” he added, with a look toward Lord

Robert, who smoothed his mustache and bent his head.

Polly glanced up quickly at the mention of the name; and Drake explained

that Rosa was a friend of his own--a lady journalist, Miss Rosa

Macquarrie, a good and clever woman. Then, turning back to Glory, he

said:

“She has been standing up for your friend Mr. Storm this week. You know

there have been attacks upon him in the newspapers?”

“Has she?” said Glory, recovering herself and looking down again. “Which

pew--stall, I mean----”

But the people were clapping their hands and turning their faces to

the opposite side of the theatre. Some great personage was entering the

royal box.

“My chief, the Home Secretary,” said Drake; and, when the applause

had subsided and the party were seated, the great man recognised his

secretary and bowed to him; whereupon it seemed to Glory that every face

in the theatre turned about and looked at her.

She did not flinch, but bore herself bravely. There was a certain thrill

and a slight twitching of the head, such as a charger makes at the first

volley in battle--nothing more, not even the quiver of an eyelid. This

was the atmosphere in which Drake lived, and she felt a vague gratitude

to him for allowing her to move in it.

“Isn't it beautiful!” she whispered, turning toward Polly; but Polly's

face was hidden behind the curtain.

The orchestra was coming in, and Glory leaned forward and counted the

fiddles, while Drake talked with Lord Robert across her shoulder.

“I found him reading Rosa's article this morning, and it seems he was

present himself and heard the sermon,” said Drake.

“And what's his opinion?” asked Lord Robert.

“Much the same as your own. Affectation--the man is suffering from the

desire to be original--more egotism than love of truth, and so forth.”

“Right, too, dear boy. All this vapouring is as much as to say: 'Look at

me! I am the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Thingamy, nephew of the Prime Minister;

and yet----'”

“I don't at all agree with the chief,” said Drake, “and I told him

so. The man has enthusiasm, and that's the very salt of the earth at

present. We are all such pessimists in these days! Thank God for anybody

who will warm us up with a little faith, say I!”

Glory's bosom heaved, and she was just about to speak, when, there was

a sudden clap as of thunder, and she leaped up in her seat. But it was

only the beginning of the overture, and she sat down laughing. There was

a tender passage in the music; and after it was over she was very quiet

for a while, and then whispered to Polly that she hoped little Johnnie

wasn't worse to-night, and it seemed wicked to enjoy one's self when any

one was so poorly.

“Who is that?” said Drake.

“My little boy whose leg was amputated,” said Glory.

“This Glory is so funny!” said Polly. “Fancy talking of that here!”

“Hush!” said Lord Robert; “the curtain is going up.” And at the next

moment Glory was laughing because they were all in the dark.

The play was Much Ado about Nothing, and Glory whispered to Drake that

she had never seen it before, but she had read Macbeth, and knew all

about Shakespeare and the drama. The first scene took her breath

away, being so large and so splendid. It represented the outside of a

gentleman's house, and she thought what a length of time it must have

taken to build it, considering it was to last only a single night. But

hush! The people were going indoors. No; they preferred to talk in the

street. Oh, we were in Italy? Yes, indeed, that was different.

Leonato delivered his first speeches forcibly, and was rewarded with

applause. Glory clapped her hands also, and said he was a very good

actor for such a very old gentleman.

Then Beatrice made her entrance, and was greeted with cheers, whereupon

Glory looked perplexed.

“It's Terry,” whispered Polly; and Drake said, “Ellen Terry”; but Glory

still looked puzzled.

“They are calling her 'Beatrice,'” she said. Then, mastering the

situation, she looked wise and said: “Of course--the actress--I quite

understand; but why do they applaud her--she has done nothing yet?”

Drake explained that the lady playing Beatrice was a great favourite,

and that the applause of the audience had been of the nature of a

welcome to a welcome guest, as much as to say they had liked her before,

and were glad to see her again. Glory thought that was beautiful, and,

looking at the gleaming eyes that shone out of the darkness, she said:

“How lovely to be an actress!”

Then she turned back to the stage, where all was bright and brilliant,

and said, “What a lovely frock, too!”

“Only a stage costume, my dear,” said Polly.

“And what beautiful diamonds!”

“Paste,” said Lord Robert,

“Hush!” said Drake; and then Benedick entered, and the audience received

him with great cheering. “Irving,” whispered Drake; and Glory looked

more perplexed than before and said:

“But you told me it was Mr. Irving's theatre, and I thought it would

have been his place to welcome----”

The vision of Benedick clapping his hands at his own entrance set Lord

Robert laughing in his cold way: but Drake said, “Be quiet, Robert!”

Glory, like a child, had ears for no conversation except her own, and

she was immersed in the play in a moment. The merry war of Beatrice and

Benedick had begun, and as she watched it her face grew grave.

“Now, that's very foolish of her,” she said; “and if, as you say, she's

a great actress, she shouldn't do such things. To talk like that to a

man is to let everybody see that she likes him better than anybody else,

though she's trying her best to hide it. The silly girl--he'll find her

out!”

But the curtain had gone down on the first act, the lights had suddenly

gone up, and her companions were laughing at her. Then she laughed also.

“Of course, it's only a play,” she said largely, “and I know all about

plays and about acting, and I can act myself, too.”

“I'm sure you can,” said Polly, lifting her lip. But Glory took no

notice.

Throughout the second act she put on the same airs of knowledge,

watching the masked ball intently, but never once uttering a laugh and

hardly ever smiling. The light, the colour, the dresses, the gay young

faces enchanted her; but she struggled to console herself. It was only

her body that was up there, leaning over the front of the box with lips

twitching and eyes gleaming; her soul was down on the stage, clad in a

lovely gown, and carrying a mask and laughing and joking with Benedick;

but she held herself in, and when the curtain fell she began to talk of

the acting.

She was still of the opinion that Leonato was excellent for such an

elderly gentleman, and when Polly praised Claudio she agreed that he was

good too.

“But Benedick is my boy for all,” she said. In some way she had

identified herself with Beatrice, and hardly ever spoke of her.

During the third act this air of wisdom and learning broke down badly.

In the middle of the ballad, “Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,” she

remembered Johnnie, and whispered to Drake how ill he had been when they

left the hospital. And when it was over, and Benedick protested that the

song had been vilely sung, she sat back in her seat and said she didn't

know how Mr. Irving could say such a thing, for she was sure the boy had

sung it beautifully.

“But that's the author,” whispered Drake; and then she said wisely:

“Oh, yes, I know--Shakespeare, of course.”

Then came the liming of the two love-birds, and she declared that

everybody was in love in plays of that sort, and that was why she liked

them; but as for those people playing the trick, they were very simple

if they thought Beatrice didn't know she loved Benedick. Claudio fell

woefully in her esteem in other respects also, and when he agreed to spy

on Hero she said he ought to be ashamed of himself anyhow.

“How ridiculous you are!” said Polly. “It's the author, isn't it?”

“Then the author ought to be ashamed of himself, also, for it is unjust

and cruel and unnecessary,” said Glory.

The curtain had come down again by this time, and the men were deep in

an argument about morality in art, Lord Robert protesting that art had

no morality, and Drake maintaining that what Glory said was right, and

there was no getting to the back of it.

But the fourth act witnessed Glory's final vanquishment. When she found

the scene was the inside of a church and they were to be present at a

wedding, she could not keep still on her seat for delight; but when the

marriage was stopped and Claudio uttered his denunciation of Hero,

she said it was just like him, and it would serve him right if nobody

believed him.

“Hush!” said somebody near them.

“But they are believing him,” said Glory quite audibly.

“Hush! Hush!” came from many parts of the theatre.

“Well, that's shameful--her father, too----” began Glory.

“Hush, Glory!” whispered Drake; but she had risen to her feet, and when

Hero fainted and fell she uttered a cry.

“What a girl!” whispered Polly. “Sit down--everybody's looking!”

“It's only a play, you know,” whispered Drake; and Glory sat down and

said:

“Well, yes; of course, it's only a play. Did you suppose----”

But she was lost in a moment. Beatrice and Benedick were alone in the

church now; and when Beatrice said, “Kill Claudio,” Glory leaped up

again and clapped her hands. But Benedick would not kill Claudio, and

it was the last straw of all. That wasn't what she called being a great

actor, and it was shameful to “sit and listen to such plays. Lots of

disgraceful scenes happened in life, but people didn't come to the

theatre to see such things, and she would go.

“How ridiculous you are!” said Polly; but Glory was out in the corridor,

and Drake was going after her.

She came back at the beginning of the fifth act with red eyes and

confused smiles, looking very much ashamed. From that moment onward she

cried a good deal, but gave no other sign until the green curtain came

down at the end, when she said:

“It's a wonderful thing! To make people forget it's not true is the most

wonderful thing in the world!”

Lord Robert, standing behind the curtain at the back of Polly's chair,

had been laughing at Glory with his long owlish drawl, and making

cynical interjections by way of punctuating her enthusiasm; and now he

said, “Would you like to have a nearer view of your wonderful world,

Glory?”

Glory looked perplexed, and Drake muttered, “Hold your tongue, Robert!”

Then, turning to Glory, he said shortly: “He only asked if you would

like to go behind the scenes; but I don't think----”

Glory uttered a cry of delight. “Like it? Better than anything in the

world!”

“Then I must take you to a rehearsal somewhere,” said Lord Robert; “and

you'll both come to tea at the chambers afterward.”

Drake made some show of dissent; but Polly, with her most voluptuous

look upward, said it would be perfectly charming, and Glory was in

raptures.

The girls, by their own choice, went home without escort by the

Hammersmith omnibus. They sat on opposite sides and hardly talked at

all. Polly was humming idly. “Sigh no more, ladies.”

Glory was in a trance. A great, bright, beautiful world had that night

swum into her view, and all her heart was yearning for it with vague

and blind aspirations. It might be a world of dreams, but it seemed more

real than reality, and when the omnibus passed the corner of Piccadilly

Circus she forgot to look at the women who were crowding the pavement.

The omnibus drew up for them at the door of the hospital, and they took

long breaths as they went up the steps.

In the corridor to the surgical ward they came upon John Storm. His head

was down and his step was long and measured, and he seemed to be trying

to pass them in his grave silence; but Glory stopped and spoke, while

Polly went on to her cubicle.

“You here so late?” she said.

He looked steadily into her face and answered, “I was sent for--some one

was dying.”

“Was it little Johnnie?”

“Yes.”

There was not a tear now, not a quiver of an eyelid.

“I don't think I care for this life,” she said fretfully. “Death is

always about you everywhere, and a girl can never go out to enjoy

herself but----”

“It is true woman's work,” said John hotly, “the truest, noblest work a

woman can have in all the world!”

“Perhaps,” said Glory, swinging on her heel. “All the same----”

“Good-night!” said John, and he turned on his heel also.

She looked after him and laughed. Then with a little hard lump at her

heart she took herself off to bed.

Polly Love, in the next cubicle, was humming as she undressed:

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,

Men were deceivers ever.

That night Glory dreamed that she was back at Peel. She was sitting up

on the Peel hill, watching the big ships as they weighed anchor in the

bay beyond the old dead castle walls, and wishing she were going out

with them to the sea and the great cities so far away.

XV.

John Storm was sitting in his room next morning fumbling the leaves of a

book and trying to read, when a lady was announced. It was Miss Macrae,

and she came in with a flushed face, a quivering lip, and the marks of

tears in her eyes. She held his hand with the same long hand-clasp as

before, and said in a tremulous voice:

“I am ashamed of coming, and mother does not know that I am here; but I

am very unhappy, and if you can not help me----”

“Please sit down,” said John Storm.

“I have come to tell you----” she said, and then her sad eyes moved

about the room and came back to his face. “It is about Lord Robert Ure,

and I am very wretched.”

“Tell me everything, dear lady, and if there is anything I can do----”

She told him all. It was a miserable story. Her mother had engaged her

to Lord Robert Ure (there was no other way of putting it) for the sake

of his title, and he had engaged himself to her for the sake of her

wealth. She had never loved him, and had long known that he was a man of

scandalous reputation; but she had been taught that to attach weight to

such considerations would be girlish and sentimental, and she had fought

for a while and then yielded.

“You will reproach me for my feebleness,” she said, and he answered

haltingly:

“No, I do not reproach you--I pity you!”

“Well,” she said, “it is all over now, and if I am ruined, and if my

mother----”

“You have told her you can not marry him!”

“Yes.”

“Then who am I to reproach you?” he said; and rising to his feet, he

threw down his book.

Her dark eyes wandered about the room, and came back to his face again

and shone with a new lustre.

“I heard your sermon on Sunday, Mr. Storm, and I felt as if there were

nobody else in the church, and you were speaking to me alone. And last

night at the theatre----”

“Well?”

He had been tramping the room, but he stopped.

“I saw him in a box with his friend and two--two ladies.”

“Were they nurses from the hospital?”

She made a cry of surprise and said, “Then you know all about it, and

the sermon \_was\_ meant for me?”

He did not speak for a moment, and then he said with a thick utterance:

“You wish me to help you to break off this marriage, and I will try. But

if I fail--no matter what has happened in the past, or what awaits you

in the future----”

“Oh,” she said, “if I had your strength beside me I should be brave--I

should be afraid of nothing.”

“Good-bye, dear lady,” said John Storm; and before he could prevent her

she had stooped over his hand and kissed it.

John Storm had returned to his book and was clutching it with nervous

fingers, when his fellow-curate came with a message from the canon to

request his presence in the study.

“Tell him I was on the point of going down,” said John. And the Reverend

Golightly coughed and bowed himself out.

The canon had also had a visitor that morning. It was Mrs. Macrae

herself. She sat on a chair covered with a tiger skin, sniffed at her

scented handkerchief, and poured out all her sorrows.

Mercy had rebelled against her authority, and it was entirely the fault

of the new curate, Mr. Storm. She had actually refused to carry out her

engagement with Lord Robert, and it all came of that dreadful sermon on

Sunday. It was dishonourable, it was unprincipled, and it was a pretty

thing to teach girls to indulge their whims without regard to the wishes

of parents!

“Here have I been two years in London, spending a fortune on the girl

and trying to do my best for her, and the moment I fix her in one of the

first English families, this young man--this curate--this---- Upon my

honour, it's real wicked, it's shameful!” And the handkerchief steeped

in perfume went up from the nose to the eyes.

The canon swung his \_pince-nez\_. “Don't put yourself about, my dear Mrs.

Macrae. Leave the matter to me. Miss Macrae will give up her objections,

and----”

“Oh, you mustn't judge her by her quietness, canon. You don't know her

character. She's real stubborn when her mind's made up. But I'll be

as stubborn as she is--I'll take her back to America--I'll never spend

another penny----”

“And as for Mr. Storm,” continued the canon, “I'll make everything

smooth in that quarter. You mustn't think too much about the unhappy

sermon--a little youthful \_esprit fort\_--we all go through it, you

know.”

When Mrs. Macrae had gone, he rang twice for Mr. Golightly and said,

“Tell Mr. Storm to come down to me immediately.”

“With pleasure, sir,” said the little man; and then he hesitated.

“What is it?” said the canon, adjusting his glasses.

“I have never told you, sir, how I found him the night you sent me to

the hospital.”

“Well, how?”

“On his knees to a Catholic priest who was visiting a patient.”

The canon's glasses fell from his eyes and his broad face broke into

strange smiles.

“I thought the Sorceress of Rome was at the bottom of it,” he said. “His

uncle shall know of this, and unless I am sadly deceived--but fetch him

down.”

John Storm was wearing his flannel shirt that morning, and he came

downstairs with a heavy tread and swung himself, unasked, into the chair

that had just before been occupied by Mrs. Macrae.

The perpendicular wrinkles came between the canon's eyebrows and he

said: “My dear Mr. Storm, I have postponed as long as possible a

most painful interview. The fact is, your recent sermon has given the

greatest offence to the ladies of my congregation, and if such teaching

were persisted in we should lose our best people. Now, I don't want to

be angry with you, quite the contrary, but I wish to put it to you, as

your spiritual head and adviser, that your idea of religion is by no

means agreeable to the needs and necessities of the nineteenth century.

There is no freedom in such a faith, and St. Paul says, 'Where the

Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' But the theory of your

religion is not more unscriptural than its application is unwholesome.

Yours is a gloomy faith, my dear Storm, and what did Luther say of a

gloomy faith?--that the devil was very apt to be lurking behind it. As

for himself he married, you may remember; he had children, he played

chess, he loved to see young people dancing----”

“I don't object to the dancing, sir,” said John Storm. “I only object to

the tune.”

“What do you mean?” said the canon, not without insolence, and the

perpendicular wrinkles became large and heavy.

“I mean, sir,” said John Storm, “that half the young people

nowadays--the young women in the west of London especially--are asked to

dance to the Dead March.”

And then he spoke of the infamous case of Mercy Macrae, how she was

being bought and sold, and how scandalous was the reputation of the man

she was required to marry.

“That was what I was coming down to speak about, sir--to ask you to save

this innocent girl from such a mockery of holy wedlock. She is not a

child, and the law can not help her, but you can do so, because the

power of the Church is at your back. You have only to set your face

against this infamy, and say----”

“My dear Mr. Storm,” the canon was smiling condescendingly and swinging

his glasses, “the business of the Church is to solemnize marriages, not

to make them. But if the young lady comes to me I will say: 'My dear

young lady, the conditions you complain of are more common than you

suppose; put aside all foolish, romantic notions, make a nest for

yourself as comfortably as you can, and come back in a year to thank

me.'”

John Storm was on his feet; the blood was mounting to his face and

tingling in his fingers.

“And so these men are to make their wives of the daughters of the poor

first, and then ask the Church to solemnize their polygamy----”

But the canon had lifted his hand to silence him.

“My dear young friend, a policy like yours would decimate the House of

Commons and abolish the House of Lords. Practical religion has a sweet

reasonableness. We are all human, even if we are all gentlemen; and

while silly young things----”

But John Storm was out in the hall and putting on his hat to see Glory.

Glory had not yet awakened from her trance. While others were living

in to-day she was still going about in yesterday. The emotion of the

theatre was upon her, and the world of reality took the tone and colour

of drama. This made her a tender woman, but a bad nurse.

She began the day in the Outpatient Department, and a poor woman came

with a child that had bitten its tongue. Its condition required that it

should remain in the house a day or two. “Let me put the pore thing to

bed; she's allus used to me,” said the woman piteously. “Are you the

mother?” said the Sister. “No, the grandmother.” “The mother is the only

person who can enter the wards except on visiting day.” The poor woman

began to cry. Glory had to carry the child to bed, and she whispered to

the grandmother, “Come this way,” and the woman followed her. When they

came to the surgical ward, she said to the nurse in charge, “This is the

child's mother, and she has come to put the poor little thing to bed.”

Later in the morning she was sent up to help in the same ward. A patient

in great pain called to her and said, “Loosen this bandage for me,

nurse; it is killing me!” And she loosened it.

But the glamour of the theatre was upon her as well as its sentiment and

emotion, and in the space before the bed of one of the patients, at a

moment when the ward Sister was away, she began to make imitations of

Beatrice and Benedick and the singer of “Sigh no more, ladies.” The

patient was Koenig, the choirmaster of “All Saints',” a little fat

German with long mustaches, which he waxed and curled as he lay in

bed. Glory had christened him “the hippopotamus,” and at her mimicry

he laughed so much that he rolled and pitched and dived among the

bedclothes.

“Ach, Gott!” he cried, “vot a girl! Never--I haf never heard any one so

goot on de stage. Vot a voice, too! A leetle vork under a goot teacher,

and den, mein Gott! Vot is it de musicians say?--the genius has a

Cremona inside of him on which he first composes his immortal vorks. You

haf the Cremona, my dear, and I will help you to bring it out. Vot you

tink?”

It was the hour of the morning when the patients who can afford it have

their newspapers brought up to them, but the newspapers were thrown

aside; every eye was on Glory, and there was much noisy laughter and

even some clapping of hands.

Ward Sister Allworthy entered with the house doctor.

“What's the meaning of this?” she demanded. Glory told the truth, and

was reproved.

“Who has loosened this bandage?” said the doctor. The patient tried to

prevaricate, but Glory told the truth again, and was reproved once more.

“And who permitted this woman to come into the ward?” said the nurse.

“I did,” said Glory.

“You're not fit to be a nurse, miss, and I shall certainly report you as

unfit for duty.”

Glory laughed in the Sister's face.

It was at this moment that John Storm arrived after his interview with

the canon. He drew Glory into the corridor and tried to pacify her.

“Oh, don't suppose I'm going to do hospital nursing all my life,” she

said. “It may be good womanly work, but I want to be a human being

with a heart, and not a machine called Duty. How I hate and despise

my surroundings! I'll make an end of them one of these days. Sooner or

later it must come to that.”

“Your life has been deranged, Glory, and that is why you disdain your

surroundings. You were at the theatre last night.”

“Who told you that? Well, what of it? Are you one of those who think the

theatre----”

“I don't object to the theatre, Glory. It is the derangement of your

life I am thinking of; and if anybody is responsible for that he is your

enemy, not your friend.”

“You will make me angry again, as you did before,” and she began to bite

her quivering lip.

“I did not come to make you angry, Glory. I came to ask you--even to

entreat you--to break off this hateful connection.”

“Because you know nothing of this--this connection, as you say--you call

it hateful.”

“I know what I am talking about, my child. The life these men live is

worse than hateful; and it makes my heart bleed to see you falling a

victim to it.”

“You are degrading me again; you are always degrading me. Other men try

to be agreeable to me, but you---- Besides, I can not hear my friends

abused. Yes, they \_are\_ my friends. I \_was\_ at the theatre with them

last night, and I am going to take tea at their chambers on my next

holiday. So please----”

“Glory!”

With one plunge of his arm he had gripped her by the wrist.

“You are hurting me.”

“You are never to set foot in the rooms of those men!”

“Let me go!”

“You are as inexperienced as a child, Glory, and it is my duty to

protect you against yourself.”

“Let go, I say!”

“Don't destroy yourself. Think while there's time--think of your good

name, your character!”

“I shall do as I please.”

“Listen! If I have chosen to be a clergyman, it's not because I've lived

all my life in cotton wool. Let me tell you what the lives of such men

really are--the best of them, the very best. He gets up at noon, walks

in the park, takes tea with some one, grunts and groans that he must

go to somebody's dinner party, escapes to the Gaiety Theatre, sups at a

so-called club----”

“You mean Lord Robert. But what right have you to say----”

“The right of one who knows him to be as bad as this, and worse--ten

times worse! Such a man thinks he has a right to play with a girl if she

is poor. She may stake her soul, her salvation, but he risks nothing.

To-day he trifles with her; to-morrow he marries another, and flings her

to the devil!”

“There's something else in this. What is it?”

But John Storm had swung about and left her.

As soon as she was at liberty she went in search of Polly Love,

expecting to find her in her cubicle, but the cubicle was empty. Coming

out of the little room she saw a piece of paper lying on the floor. It

was a letter, carefully folded. She picked it up, unfolded it, and read

it, hardly knowing what she was doing, for her head was dizzy and her

eyes were swimming in unshed tears. It ran:

“You ask, Do I mean to adopt entirely? Yes; to bring up just the same

as if it were born to me. I hope yours will be a strong and healthy boy;

but if it is a girl----”

Glory could not understand what she was reading. Whose letter could it

be? It was addressed “X. Y. Z., Office of \_Morning Post\_.”

There was a hurried footstep approaching, and Polly came in, with her

eyes on the ground as if looking for something she had dropped. At the

next moment she had snatched the letter out of Glory's hand, and was

saying:

“What are you doing in my room? Has your friend the chaplain told you to

spy upon me?”

The expression on her face was appalling, and Glory, who had flushed up

with shame, turned away without a word.

When John Storm got back to his room he found the following letter from

the canon on his table:

“Since our interview of this morning (so strangely abridged) I have had

the honour to visit your dear uncle, the Prime Minister, and he agrees

with me that the strain of your recent examinations and the anxieties of

a new occupation have probably disturbed your health, and that it

will be prudent of you to take a short vacation. I have therefore the

greatest pleasure in assuring you that you are free from duty for a

week, a fortnight, or a month, as your convenience may determine; and

during your much-regretted absence I will do my best to sustain the

great loss of your invaluable help.”

On reading the message, John Storm flung himself into a chair and burst

into a long peal of bitter laughter. But when the laughter was spent

there came a sense of great loneliness. Then he remembered Mrs.

Callender, and went across to her little house in Victoria Square, and

showed her the canon's letter and told her everything.

“Lies, lies, lies!” she said. “Ah, laddie, laddie! to lie, to know you

lie, to be known to lie, and yet to go on lying--that is the whole art

of life with these fashionable shepherds and their fashionable flock.

As for that woman--ugh! She was separated from her husband for two years

before his death; and he died in a hotel abroad without kith or kin

to comfort him: and now she wears his hair in a gold locket on her

bosom--that's what she is! But all's well that ends well, laddie. The

\_holly\_ will do ye good, for you were killing yerself with work. You'll

no be spending it in your little island, now, eh?”

John Storm was sitting with one leg across the other, and his head on

his hand and his elbow on his knee.

“I shall spend it,” he said, “in Retreat at the Brotherhood in

Bishopsgate.”

“God bless me, man! is that the change of air ye'll be going to gie

yoursel'? It may be well enough for men with water in their veins; but

you have blood, laddie--blood! Tak' care, tak' care!”

XVI.

“Still at Martha's.

“Quite right, dear Aunt Anna, the terms 'authority' and 'obedience' must

be known and honoured. Only, when it is a case of put a penny in the

slot and out comes the word of command, you can't exactly feel that way.

The board of directors put the penny into the slot of this institution,

and the word of command, so far as I am concerned, comes out of the

mouth of Ward Sister Allworthy. I call her the White Owl. She is five

feet ten, and has big round cheeks which sometimes I should dearly

love to slap--as mothers slap their 'childers' when they administer a

humiliating punishment.

“So you think you notice 'a certain want of aptitude'? Well, I don't

think I am naturally a bad nurse, Aunt Anna. The patients like me,

and they don't die of the dumps when I am about. Only I can't practise

nursing by the rule of three, and as a consequence I get myself

reported. Sister Allworthy has reported me three times, bless her!

Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed, and now she threatens to have me up

before the matron. That dear soul has difficulties of locomotion, being

buried under the Pelion on Ossa of a mountain of fat. She inhabits a

cave of Adullam on the edge of the Inferno--i. e., the 'theatre'--below

stairs, and has a small dog with a bad heart and broken wind always

nagging on her knee. I call her the Chief Broker in Breakages and Head

Dealer in Diseases, and she is only seen once a day when she comes round

to take stock. You have to be nice with her Majesty,' for she can haul

you up at the weekly board, and put a score against you in the black

book, and send you away without a certificate. If that happens, a girl

who expects to earn her living as a nurse has never any particular need

to pray, 'In all time of our wealth, good Lord deliver us.'

“But, oh, my dear grandfather, what do you think of our John Storm

now? After uttering the lamentations of Jeremiah and predicting all the

plagues of Egypt, he has gone off to hold his peace--that is to say, he

has gone to make his 'Retreat,' which, being interpreted, means praying

without ceasing, and also without speaking, eighteen hours a day, six

days at a spell, and sometimes sixty. When he comes back reeking with

all that holiness I shall feel myself such a miserable sinner----

“Soberly, I could cry to think of it, though, and when I remember that

perhaps I was partly to blame----

“It was this way: In that 'ter'ble discoorse' I told you he had

scotched the snake, not killed it, and his vicar (I call him Mr.

Worldly Wiseman), finding that his ladies and nobility went out like the

Pharisees, one by one, told our poor John he was ill and stood in need

of instant rest. It looked like it certainly, and the trouble must have

been a sort of human rabies in which the poor victim bites at his best

friends first. He came here with his lower lip hanging like an old

dog's, and I was so stupid as not to see that he was being hunted like a

dog too, and only told myself how ugly and untidy he had grown of late.

But the Sister had just before been showing me her tusks again, and

being possessed with a fury, I gave it him world without end. He was

very unreasonable though, and seemed to say that I must have no friends

and no amusements that were not of his choosing, and that after spending

my days walking through the inside of this precious hospital I must

spend my nights walking round the outside of it. Being a woman of like

passions with himself, I had a 'ter'ble dust' with him on the subject,

and the next I heard was that he was going to make Retreat in a kind of

English-church monastery somewhere in the city, where he would 'try

to disentangle' himself 'from the world' and see what he 'ought to do

next.' He sent me his blessing with this message, and I sent him back

mine--a less holy one, but he'll make it do.

“I thought you would remember Mr. Drake's mother, dear Auntie Rachel.

Yes, he is fair also, and wears his hair brushed across his forehead,

much as you see in the portraits of Napoleon. In fact, he is a sort of

fair-haired Napoleon in nature as well.

“He took me to the theatre the other evening, and that was the great

event I intended to tell you about. It was quite a proper sort of place,

and nobody behaved badly except Glory, who kept talking and preaching

and going silly with excitement all the evening through, with the result

that everybody was staring mewards and wanting to turn me out.

“Since then Mr. Drake's friend, Lord Bob, who knows all the actors on

earth seemingly, has taken us 'behind,' and we have seen a rehearsal.

Things don't look quite the same behind as before, but nothing in the

world does that, and I wasn't a bit disenchanted. In fact, I found

everything delightfully romantic and amusing, and really I do not think

it \_can\_ be so very wicked to be an actress. Do you?

“My friend Polly Love was with us. Polly is a probationer also, and

sleeps in the cubicle next to mine, and after the rehearsal we went to

the gentlemen's chambers to tea. I can hear what Aunt Anna is saying:

'Goodness gracious! you didn't do that, girl?' Well, yes, I did though.

In the interest of my sex I wanted to see how two boys could live in

rooms all by themselves, and it's perfectly shocking how well they get

on without a woman. Of course I wasn't such a silly as to let wit about

that, but after I had examined their sitting-room and cross-examined its

owners on its numerous photographs (chiefly feminine) and tried how it

feels to hold their big pipes between one's teeth, I whipped off my hat

at once and began to put things straight for them, and then I made the

tea.

“By this time the gentlemen had changed into their jackets, and I sent

them flying around for cups and saucers and sugar basins. It turned out

that they had only one teaspoon in the place, and when anybody wanted

to stir her tea she said, 'Will you oblige me with \_spoon\_ please?'

What fun it was! We laughed until we cried--at least one of us did--and

eventually we managed to break the teapot and a slop basin and to

overturn a standing lamp. It was perfectly delightful!

“But the best sport was after tea was over, and Glory was called on

for imitations of the people we had seen at the theatre. Of course she

couldn't imitate a man when she was in a woman's frock, so being as

bright as diamonds that night and twice 'as impudent as a white stone,'

[\* A Manx proverb] she actually conceived the idea of dressing up in

man's clothes. Naturally the gentlemen were enchanted, so I hope Auntie

Rachel isn't terribly shocked. Mr. Drake lent me his knickerbockers and

a velvet jacket, and Polly and I went into the bedroom, where she helped

me to find the way to put them on. With my own blouse and my own hat

(I am wearing a felt one now with a broad brim and a feather), and \_of

course\_ my own slippers and stockings, I made a bogh of a boy, I can

tell you. I thought Polly would have died of delight in the bedroom,

but when we came out she kept covering her face and crying, 'Glory, how

\_can\_ you!'

“I'm afraid I sang and talked more than was good for the soul, but it

was all Mr. Drake's doing. He declared I was such a marvellous mimic

that it was simply a waste of time and the good gifts of God to go on

hospital nursing any longer. And I do believe that if anything happened,

and the need arose, he would----

“Only fancy Glory a public person, and all the world and his wife going

down on their knees to her! But then it's fearful to think of being an

actress, isn't it?

“After all such glorious 'outs' I have to go 'in' to the hospital, and

then comes my fit again. Do you remember my little boy who said he was

going to the angels, and he would get lots of gristly pork up there? He

has gone, and I don't think I like nursing children now. Oh, how I long

to go out into the world! I want to shine in it. I want to become great

and glorious. I could do it too, I know I could. I have got it in me,

I am sure I have. Yet here I am in a little dark corner crying for the

sunshine!

“How silly this is, isn't it? It sounds like madness. My dears, allow me

to introduce you to some one--

“Glory Quayle, 'March Hare and Madwoman.'”

XVII.

The board room of the hospital of Martha's Vineyard was a large and

luxurious chamber, with an oval window at its farther end, and its two

side walls panelled with portraits of former chairmen and physicians. In

great oaken armchairs, behind ponderous oaken tables, covered with green

cloth and furnished with writing pads, the Board of Governors sat in

three sides of a square, leaving an open space in the middle. This

open space was reserved for patients seeking admission or receiving

discharge, and for officers of the hospital presenting their weekly

reports.

On a morning in August the matron's report had closed with a startling

item. It recommended the immediate suspension of a nurse on the ground

of gross impropriety of conduct. The usual course in such a case was

for the board of the hospital to depute the matron to act for them in

private, but the chairman in this instance was a peppery person, with a

stern mouth and a solid under-jaw.

“This is a most serious matter,” he said. “I think--this being a public

institution--I really think the board should investigate the case for

itself. We ought to assure ourselves that--that, in fact, no other

irregularity is going on in the hospital.”

“May it please your lordship,” said a rotund voice from, one of the

side tables, “I would suggest that a case like this of grievous moral

delinquency comes directly within the dispensation of the chaplain, and

if he has done his duty by the unhappy girl (as no doubt he has) he must

have a statement to make to the board with regard to her.”

It was Canon Wealthy.

“I may mention,” he added, “that Mr. Storm has now returned to his

duties, and is at present in the hospital.”

“Send for him,” said the chairman.

When John Storm entered the board room it was remarked that he looked no

better for his holiday. His cheeks were thinner, his eyes more hollow,

and there was a strange pallor under his swarthy skin.

The business was explained to him, and he was asked if he had any

statement to make with regard to the nurse whom the matron had reported

for suspension.

“No,” he said, “I have no statement.”

“Do you mean to tell the board,” said the chairman, “that you

know nothing of this matter--that the case is too trivial for your

attention--or perhaps that you have never even spoken to the girl on the

subject?”

“That is so--I never have,” said John.

“Then you shall do so now,” said the chairman, and he put his hand on

the bell beside him, and the messenger appeared.

“You can not intend, sir, to examine the girl here,” said John.

“And why not?”

“Before so many--and all of us men save one. Surely the matron----”

The canon rose to his feet again. “My young brother is naturally

sensitive, my lord, but I assure him his delicate feelings are wasted on

a girl like this. He forgets that the shame lies in the girl's sin, not

in her just and necessary punishment.”

“Bring her in,” said the chairman. The matron whispered to the

messenger, and he left the room.

“Pardon me, sir,” said John Storm; “if it is your expectation that I

should question the nurse on her sin, as the canon says, I can not do

so.”

“Can not?”

“Well, I will not.”

“And is that your idea of your duty as a chaplain?”

“It is the matron's duty, not the chaplain's, to----”

“The matron! The matron! This is your parish, sir--your parish. A great

public institution is in danger of a disgraceful scandal, and you who

are responsible for its spiritual welfare--really, gentlemen----”

Again the canon rose with a conciliatory smile.

“I think I understand my young friend,” he said, “and your lordship and

the hoard will appreciate his feelings, however you may disapprove of

his judgment. What generous heart can not sympathize with the sensitive

spirit of the youthful clergyman who shrinks from the spectacle of guilt

and shame in a young and perhaps beautiful woman? But if it will relieve

your lordship from an embarrassing position, I am myself willing----”

“Thank you,” said the chairman; and then the girl was brought into the

room in charge of Sister Allworthy.

She was holding her head down and trying to cover her face with her

hands.

“Your name, girl?” said the canon.

“Mary Elizabeth Love,” she faltered.

“You are aware, Mary Elizabeth Love, that our excellent and indulgent

matron” (here he bowed to a stout lady who sat in the open space) “has

been put to the painful duty of reporting you for suspension, which is

equivalent to your immediate discharge. Now, I can not hold out a hope

that the board will not ratify her recommendation, but it may perhaps

qualify the terms of your 'character' if you can show these gentlemen

that the unhappy lapse from good conduct which brings you to this

position of shame and disgrace is due in any measure to irregularities

practised perhaps within this hospital, or to the temptations of any one

connected with it.”

The girl began to cry.

“Speak, nurse; if you have anything to say, the gentlemen are willing to

hear it.”

The girl's crying deepened into sobs.

“Useless!” said the chairman.

“Impossible!” said the canon.

But some one suggested that perhaps the nurse had a girl friend in the

hospital who could throw light on the difficult situation. Then Sister

Allworthy whispered to the matron, who said, “Bring her in.”

John Storm's face had assumed a fixed and absent expression, but he saw

a girl of larger size than Polly Love enter the room with a gleam, as it

were, of sunshine on her golden-red hair. It was Glory.

There was some preliminary whispering, and then the canon began again:

“You are a friend and companion of Mary Elizabeth Love?”

“Yes,” said Glory.

Her voice was full and calm, and a look of quiet courage lit up her

girlish beauty.

“You have known her other friends, no doubt, and perhaps you have shared

her confidence?”

“I think so.”

“Then you can tell the board if the unhappy condition in which she finds

herself is due to any one connected with this hospital.”

“I think not.”

“Not to any officer, servant, or member of any school attached to it?”

“No.”

“Thank you,” said the chairman, “that is quite enough,” and down the

tables of the governors there were nods and smiles of satisfaction.

“What have I done?” said Glory.

“You have done a great service to an ancient and honourable

institution,” said the canon, “and the best return the board can

make for your candour and intelligence is to advise you to avoid such

companionship for the future and to flee such perilous associations.”

A certain desperate recklessness expressed itself in Glory's face, and

she stepped up to Polly, who was now weeping audibly, and put her arm

about the girl's waist.

“What are the girl's relatives?” said the chairman.

The matron replied out of her book. Polly was an orphan, both her

parents being dead. She had a brother who had lately been a patient in

the hospital, but he was only a lay-helper in the Anglican Monastery at

Bishopsgate Street, and therefore useless for present purposes.

There was some further whispering about the tables. Was this the

girl who had been recommended to the hospital by the coroner who had

investigated a certain notorious and tragic case? Yes.

“I think I have heard of some poor and low relations,” said the canon,

“but their own condition is probably too needy to allow them to help her

at a time like the present.”

Down to this moment Polly had done nothing but cry, but now she flamed

up in a passion of pride and resentment.

“It's false!” she cried. “I have no poor and low relations, and I want

nobody's help. My friend is a gentleman--as much a gentleman as anybody

here--and I can tell you his name, if you like. He lives in St. James's

Street, and he is Lord----”

“Stop, girl!” said the canon, in a loud voice. “We can not allow you

to compromise the honour of a gentleman by mentioning his name in his

absence.”

John stepped to one of the tables of the governors and took up a

pamphlet which lay there. It was the last annual report of Martha's

Vineyard, with a list of its governors and subscribers.

“The girl is suspended,” said the chairman, and reaching for the

matron's book, he signed it and returned it.

“This,” said the canon, “appears to be a case for Mrs. Callender's

Maternity Home at Soho, and with the consent of the board I will request

the chaplain to communicate with that lady immediately.”

John Storm had heard, but he made no answer; he was turning over the

leaves of the pamphlet.

The canon hemmed and cleared his throat. “Mary Elizabeth Love,” he

said, “you have brought a stain upon this honourable and hitherto

irreproachable institution, but I trust and believe that ere long, and

before your misbegotten child is born, you may see cause to be grateful

for our forbearance and our charity. Speaking for myself, I confess it

is an occasion of grief to me, and might well, I think, be a cause of

sorrow to him who has had your spiritual welfare in his keeping” (here

he gave a look toward John), “that you do not seem to realize the

position of infamy in which you stand. We have always been taught to

think of a woman as sweet and true and pure; a being hallowed to our

sympathy by the most sacred associations, and endeared to our love

by the tenderest ties, and it is only right” (the canon's voice was

breaking), “it is only right, I say, that you should be told at once,

and in this place--though tardily and too late--that for the woman who

wrongs that ideal, as you have wronged it, there is but one name known

among persons of good credit and good report--a hard name, a terrible

name, a name of contempt and loathing--the name of \_prostitute!\_”

Crushing the pamphlet in his hand, John Storm had taken a step toward

the canon, but he was too late. Some one was there before him. It was

Glory. With her head erect and her eyes flashing, she stood between the

weeping girl and the black-coated judge, and everybody could see the

swelling and heaving of her bosom.

“How dare you!” she cried. “You say you have been taught to think of a

woman as sweet and pure. Well, \_I\_ have been taught to think of a \_man\_

as strong and brave, and tender and merciful to every living creature,

but most of all to a woman, if she is erring and fallen. But you are not

brave and tender; you are cruel and cowardly, and I despise you and hate

you!”

The men at the tables were rising from their seats.

“Oh, you have discharged my friend,” she said, “and you may discharge

me, too, if you like--if you \_dare\_! But I will tell everybody that

it was because I would not let you insult a poor girl with a cruel and

shameful name, and trample upon her when she was down. And everybody

will believe me, because it is the truth; and anything else you may say

will be a lie, and all the world will know it!”

The matron was shambling up also.

“How dare you, miss! Go back to your ward this instant! Do you know whom

you are speaking to?”

“Oh, it's not the first time I've spoken to a clergyman, ma'am. I'm the

daughter of a clergyman, and the granddaughter of a clergyman, and

I know what a clergyman is when he is brave and good, and gentle and

merciful to all women, and when he is a man and a gentleman--not a

Pharisee and a crocodile!”

“Please take that girl away,” said the chairman.

But John Storm was by her side in a moment.

“No, sir,” he said, “nobody shall do that.”

But now Glory had broken down too, and the girls, like two lost

children, were crying on each other's breasts. John opened the door and

led them up to it.

“Take your friend to her room, nurse: I shall be with you presently.”

Then he turned back to the chairman, still holding the crumpled pamphlet

in his hand, and said calmly and respectfully:

“And now that you have finished with the woman, sir, may I ask what you

intend to do with the man?”

“What man?”

“Though I did not feel myself qualified to sit in judgment on the

broken heart of a fallen girl, I happen to know the name which she was

forbidden to mention, and I find it here, sir--here in your list of

subscribers and governors.”

“Well, what of it?”

“You have wiped the girl out of your books, sir. Now I ask you to wipe

the man out also.”

“Gentlemen,” said the chairman, rising, “the business of the board is at

an end.”

XVIII.

John Storm wrote a letter to Mrs. Callender explaining Polly Love's

situation and asking her to call on the girl immediately, and then he

went out in search of Lord Robert Ure at the address he had discovered

in the report.

He found the man alone on his arrival, but Drake came in soon afterward.

Lord Robert received him with a chilly bow; Drake offered his hand

coldly; neither of them requested him to sit.

“You are surprised at my visit, gentlemen,” said John, “but I have just

now been present at a painful scene, and I thought it necessary that you

should know something about it.”

Then he described what had occurred in the board room, and in doing so

dwelt chiefly on the abjectness of the girl's humiliation. Lord Robert

stood by the window rapping a tune on the window pane, and Drake sat in

a low chair with his legs stretched out and his hands in his trousers

pockets.

“But I am at a loss to understand why you have thought it necessary to

come here to tell that story,” said Lord Robert.

“Lord Robert,” said John, “you understand me perfectly.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Storm, I do not understand you in the least.”

“Then I will not ask you if you are responsible for the girl's

position.”

“Don't.”

“But I will ask you a simpler and easier question.”

“What is it?”

“When are you going to marry her?”

Lord Robert burst into ironical laughter and faced round to Drake.

“Well, these men--these curates--their assurance, don't you know...

May I ask your reverence what is \_your\_ position in this matter--your

standing, don't you know?”

“That of chaplain of the hospital.”

“But you say she has been, turned out of it.”

“Very well, Lord Robert, merely that of a man who intends to protect an

injured woman.”

“Oh, I know,” said Lord Robert dryly, “I understand these heroics. I've

heard of your sermons, Mr. Storm--your interviews with ladies, and so

forth.”

“And I have heard of your doings with girls,” said John. “What are you

going to do for this one?”

“Exactly what I please.”

“Take care! You know what the girl is. It's precisely such girls----

At this moment she is tottering on the brink of hell, Lord Robert. If

anything further should happen--if you should disappoint her--she is

looking to you and building up hopes--if she should fall still lower and

destroy herself body and soul----”

“My dear Mr. Storm, please understand that I shall do everything or

nothing for the girl exactly as I think well, don't you know, without

the counsel or coercion of any clergyman.”

There was a short silence, and then John Storm said quietly: “It is no

worse than I expected. But I had to hear it from your own lips, and I

have heard it. Good-day.”

He went back to the hospital and asked for Glory. She was banished with

Polly to the housekeeper's room. Polly was catching flies on the window

(which overlooked the park) and humming, “Sigh no more, ladies.” Glory's

eyes were red with weeping. John drew Glory aside.

“I have written to Mrs. Callender, and she will be here presently,” he

said.

“It is useless,” said Glory. “Polly will refuse to go. She expects Lord

Robert to come for her, and she wants me to call on Mr. Drake.”

“But I have seen the man myself.”

“Lord Robert?”

“Yes. He will do nothing.”

“Nothing!”

“Nothing, or worse than nothing.”

“Impossible!”

“Nothing of that kind is impossible to men like those.”

“They are not so bad as that though, and even if Lord Robert is all you

say, Mr. Drake----”

“They are friends and housemates, Glory, and what the one is the other

must be also.”

“Oh, no. Mr. Drake is quite a different person.”

“Don't be misled, my child. If there were any real difference between

them----”

“But there is; and if a girl were in trouble or wanted help in

anything----”

“He would drop her, Glory, like an old lottery ticket that has drawn a

blank and is done for.”

She was biting her lip, and it was bleeding slightly.

“You dislike Mr. Drake,” she said, “and that is why you can not be

just to him. But he is always praising and excusing you, and when any

one----”

“His praises and excuses are nothing to me. I am not thinking of myself.

I am thinking----”

He had a look of intense excitement, and his speaking was abrupt and

disconnected.

“You were splendid this morning, Glory, and when I think of the girl who

defied that Pharisee, being perhaps herself the victim--The man asked

me what my standing was, as if that--But if I had really had a right, if

the girl had been anything to me, if she had been somebody else and not

a light, shallow, worthless creature, do you know what I should have

said to him? 'Since things have gone so far, sir, you must marry the

girl now, and keep to her and be faithful to her, and love her, or else

I----”

“You are flushed and excited, and there is something I do not

understand----”

“Promise me, Glory, that you will break off this bad connection.”

“You are unreasonable. I can not promise.”

“Promise that you will never see these men again.”

“But I must see Mr. Drake at once and arrange about Polly.”

“Don't mention the man's name again; it makes my blood boil to hear you

speak it!”

“But this is tyranny; and you are worse than the canon; and I can not

bear it.”

“Very well; as you will. It's of no use struggling--What is the time?”

“Six o'clock nearly.”

“I must see the canon before he goes to dinner.”

His manner had changed suddenly. He looked crushed and benumbed.

“I am going now.” he said, turning aside.

“So soon? When shall I see you again?”

“God knows!--I mean--I don't know,” he answered in a helpless way.

He was looking around, as if taking a mental farewell of everything.

“But we can not part like this,” she said. “I think you like me a little

still, and----”

Her supplicating voice made him look up into her face for a moment.

Then he turned away, saying, “Good-bye, Glory.” And with a look of utter

exhaustion he went out of the room.

Glory walked to a window at the end of the corridor that she might see

him when he crossed the street. There was just a glimpse of his back as

he turned the corner with a slow step and his head on his breast. She

went back crying.

“I could fancy a fresh herring for supper, dear,” said Polly. “What do

you say, housekeeper?”

John Storm went back to the canon's house a crushed and humiliated man.

“I can do no more,” he thought. “I will give it up.” His old

influence with Glory must have been lost. Something had come between

them--something or some one. “Anyhow it is all over and I must go away

somewhere.”

To go on seeing Glory would be useless. It would also be dangerous. As

often as he was face to face with her he wanted to lay hold of her and

say, “You must do this and this, because it is my wish and direction

and command, and it is \_I\_ that say so!” In the midst of God's work how

subtle were the temptations of the devil!

But with every step that he went plodding home there came other

feelings. He could see the girl quite plainly, her fresh young face, so

strong and so tender, so full of humour and heart's love, and all the

sweet beauty of her form and figure. Then the old pain in his breast

came back again and he began to be afraid.

“I will take refuge in the Church,” he thought. In prayer and penance

and fasting he would find help and consolation. The Church was

peace--peace from the noise of life, and strength to fight and to

vanquish. But the Church must be the Church of God--not of the world,

the flesh, and the devil.

“Ask the canon if he can see me immediately,” said John Storm to the

footman, and he stood in the hall for the answer.

The canon had taken tea that day in the study with his daughter

Felicity. He was reclining on the sofa, propped up with velvet cushions,

and holding the teacup and saucer like the wings of a butterfly in both

hands.

“We have been deceived, my dear” (sip, sip), “and we must pay the

penalty of the deception. Yet we have nothing to blame ourselves

for--nothing whatever. Here was a young man, from Heaven knows where,

bent on entering the diocese. True, he was merely the son of a poor

lord who had lived the life of a hermit, but he was also the nephew, and

presumably the heir, of the Prime Minister of England” (sip, sip, sip).

“Well, I gave him his title. I received him into my house. I made

him free of my family--and what is the result? He has disregarded my

instructions, antagonized my supporters, and borne himself toward me

with an attitude of defiance, if not disdain.”

Felicity poured out a second cup of tea for her father, sympathized

with him, and set forth her own grievances. The young man had no

conversation, and his reticence was quite embarrassing. Sometimes

when she had friends, and asked him to come down, his silence--well,

really----

“We might have borne with these little deficiencies, my dear, if the

Prime Minister had been deeply interested. But he is not. I doubt if he

has ever seen his nephew since that first occasion. And when I called

at Downing Street, about the time of the sermon, he seemed entirely

undisturbed. 'The young man is in the wrong place, my dear canon; send

him back to me.' That was all.”

“Then why don't you do it?” said Felicity.

“It is coming to that, my child; but blood is thicker than water, you

know, and after all----”

It was at this moment the footman entered the room to ask if the canon

could see Mr. Storm.

“Ah, the man himself!” said the canon, rising. “Jenkyns, remove the

tray.” Dropping his voice: “Felicity, I will ask you to leave us

together. After what occurred this morning at the hospital anything

like a scene----” Then aloud: “Bring him in, Jenkyns.--Say something, my

dear. Why don't you speak?--Come in, my dear Storm.--You'll see to that

matter for me, Felicity. Thanks, thanks! Sorry to send you off, but I'm

sure Mr. Storm will excuse you. Good-bye for the present.”

Felicity went out as John Storm came in. He looked excited, and there

was an expression of pain in his face.

“I am sorry to disturb you, but I need not detain you long,” he said.

“Sit down, Mr. Storm, sit down,” said the canon, returning to the sofa.

But John did not sit. He stood by the chair vacated by Felicity, and

kept beating his hat on the back of it.

“I have come to tell you, sir, that I wish to resign my curacy.”

The canon glanced up with a stealthy expression, and thought: “How

clever of him! To resign before he is told plainly that he has to

go--that is very clever.”

Then he said aloud: “I am sorry, very sorry. I'm always sorry to part

with my clergy. Still--you see I am entirely frank with you--I have

observed that you have not been comfortable of late, and I think you are

acting for the best. When do you wish to leave me?”

“As soon as convenient--as early as I can be spared.”

The canon smiled condescendingly. “That need not trouble you at all.

With a staff like mine, you see---- Of course, you are aware that I am

entitled to three months' notice?”

“Yes.”

“But I will waive it; I will not detain you. Have you seen your uncle on

the subject?”

“No.”

“When you do so please say that I always try to remove impediments

from a young man's path if he is uncomfortable--in the wrong place, for

example.”

“Thank you,” said John Storm, and then he hesitated a moment before

stepping to the door.

The canon rose and bowed affably. “Not an angry word,” he thought. “Who

shall say that blood does not count for something?”

“Believe me, my dear Storm,” he said aloud, “I shall always remember

with pride and pleasure our early connection. Perhaps I think you are

acting unwisely, even foolishly, but it will continue to be a source of

satisfaction to me that I was able to give you your first opportunity,

and if your next curacy should chance to be in London, I trust you will

allow us to maintain the acquaintance.”

John Storm's face was twitching and his pulses were beating violently,

but he was trying to control himself.

“Thank you,” he said; “but it is not very likely----”

“Don't say you are giving up Orders, dear Mr. Storm, or perhaps that you

are only leaving our church in order to unite yourself to another. Ah!

have I touched on a tender point? You must not be surprised that

rumours have been rife. We can not silence the tongues of busybodies

and mischief-makers, you know. And I confess, speaking as your spiritual

head and adviser, it would be a source of grief to me if a young

clergyman, who has eaten the bread of the Establishment, and my own as

well, were about to avow himself the subject and slave of an Italian

bishop.”

John Storm came back from the door.

“What you are saying, sir, requires that I should be plain spoken. In

giving up my curacy I am not leaving the Church of England; I am only

leaving you.”

“I am so glad, so relieved!”

“I am leaving you because I can not live with you any longer, because

the atmosphere you breathe is impossible to me, because your religion is

not my religion, or your God my God!”

“You surprise me. What have I done?”

“A month ago I asked you to set your face as a clergyman against the

shameful and immoral marriage of a man of scandalous reputation, but

you refused; you excused the man and sided with him. This morning you

thought it necessary to investigate in public the case of one of that

man's victims, and you sided with the man again--you denied to the girl

the right even to mention the scoundrel's name!”

“How differently we see things! Do you know I thought my examination of

the poor young thing was merciful to the point of gentleness! And that,

I may tell you--notwithstanding the female volcano who came down on

me--was the view of the board and of his lordship the chairman.”

“Then I am sorry to differ from them. I thought it unnecessary and

unmanly and brutal, and even blasphemous!”

“Mr. Storm! Do you know what you are saying?”

“Perfectly, and I came to say it.”

His eyes were wild, his voice was hoarse; he was like a man breaking the

bonds of a tyrannical slavery.

“You called that poor child a prostitute because she had wasted the

good gifts which God had given her. But God has given good gifts to you

also--gifts of intellect and eloquence with which you might have raised

the fallen and supported the weak, and defended the downtrodden and

comforted the broken-hearted--and what have you done with them? You have

bartered them for benefices, and peddled them for popularity; you have

given them in exchange for money, for houses, for furniture, for things

like this--and this--and this! You have sold your birthright for a mess

of pottage, therefore \_you\_ are the prostitute!”

“You're not yourself, sir; leave me,” and, crossing the room, the canon

touched the bell.

“Yes, ten thousand times more the prostitute than that poor fallen girl

with her taint of blood and will! There would be no such women as she is

to fall victims to evil companionship if there were no such men as you

are to excuse their betrayers and to side with them. Who is most the

prostitute--the woman who sells her body, or the man who sells his

soul?”

“You're mad, sir! But I want no scene----”

“You are the worst prostitute on the streets of London, and yet you are

in the Church, in the pulpit, and you call yourself a follower of the

One who forgave the woman and shamed the hypocrites, and had not where

to lay his head!”

But the canon had faced about and fled out of the room.

The footman came in answer to the bell, and, finding no one but John

Storm, he told him that a lady was waiting for him in a carriage at the

door.

It was Mrs. Callender. She had come to say that she had called at the

hospital for Polly Love, and the girl had refused to go to the home at

Soho.

“But whatever's amiss with ye, man?” she said. “You might have seen a

ghost!”

He had come out bareheaded, carrying his hat in his hand.

“It's all over,” he said. “I've waited weeks and weeks for it, but it's

over at last. It was of no use mincing matters, so I spoke out.”

His red eyes were ablaze, but a great load seemed to be lifted off his

mind, and his soul seemed to exult.

“I have told him I must leave him, and I am to go, immediately. The

disease was dire, and the remedy had to be dire also.”

The old lady was holding her breath and watching his flushed face with

strained attention.

“And what may ye be going to do now?”

“To become a religious in something more than the name; to leave

the world altogether with its idleness and pomp and hypocrisy and

unreality.”

“Get yoursel' some flesh on your bones first, man. It's easy to see

ye've no been sleeping or eating these days and days together.”

“That's nothing--nothing at all. God can not take half your soul. You

must give yourself entirely.”

“Eh, laddie, laddie, I feared me this was what ye were coming til. But

a man can not bury himself before he is dead. He may bury the half of

himself, but is it the better half? What of his thoughts--his wandering

thoughts? Choose for yoursel', though, and if you must go--if you must

hide yoursel' forever, and this is the last I'm to see of ye--ye may

kiss me, laddie--I'm old enough, surely.--Go on, James, man, what for

are ye sitting up there staring?”

When John Storm returned to his room he found a letter from Parson

Quayle. It was a good-natured, cackling epistle, full of sweet nothings

about Glory and the hospital, about Peel and the discovery of ancient

ruins in the graveyards of the treen chapels, but it closed with this

postscript:

“You will remember old Chalse, a sort of itinerant beggar and the

privileged pet of everybody. The silly old gawk has got hold of your

father and has actually made the old man believe that you are bewitched!

Some one has put the evil eye on you--some woman it would seem--and that

is the reason why you have broken away and behaved so strangely! It is

most extraordinary. That such a foolish superstition should have taken

hold of a man like your father is really quite astonishing, but if it

will only soften his rancour against you and help to restore peace we

may perhaps forgive the distrust of Providence and the outrage on common

sense. All's well that ends well, you know, and we shall all be happy.”

XIX.

“Martha's.

“Lost, stolen, or strayed--a man, a clergyman, answers to the name of

John Storm. Or rather he does not answer, having allowed himself to be

written to twice without making so much as a yap or a yowl by way of

reply. Last seen six days ago, when he was suffering from the sulks,

after being in a de'il of a temper, with a helpless and innocent maiden

who 'doesn't know nothin',' that can have given him offence. Any one

giving information of his welfare and whereabouts to the said H. and I.

M. will be generously and appropriately rewarded.

“But, soberly, my dear John Storm, what has become of you? Where are

you, and whatever have you been doing since the day of the dreadful

inquisition? Frightful rumours are flying through the air like knives,

and they cut and wound a poor girl woefully. Therefore be good enough to

reply by return of post--and in person.

“Meantime please accept it as a proof of my eternal regard that after

two knock-down blows received in silence I am once more coming up

smiling. Know, then, that Mr. Drake has justified all expectations,

having compelled Lord Robert to provide for Polly, who is now safely

ensconced in her own country castle somewhere in St. John's Wood,

furnished to hand with servants and vassals complete. Thus you will be

charmed to observe in me the growth of the prophetic instinct, for you

will remember my positive prediction that if a girl were in trouble,

and the necessity arose, Mr. Drake would be the first to help her. Of

course, he had a great deal to say that was as sweet as syrup on the

loyalty of my own friendship also, and he expended much beautiful

rhetoric on yourself as well. It seems that you are one of those who

follow the impulse of the heart entirely, while the rest of us divide

our allegiance with the head; and if you display sometimes the severity

of a tyrant of our sex, that is only to be set down as another proof of

your regard and of the elevation of the pedestal whereon you desire us

to be placed. Thus he reconciles me to the harmony of the universe, and

makes all things easy and agreeable.

“This being the case, I have now to inform you that Polly's baby has

come, having hastened his arrival (it is a man, bless it!) owing either

to the tears or the terrors of the crocodile. And being on night duty

now, and therefore at liberty from 6.30 to 8.30, I intend to pay him my

first call of ceremony this evening, when anybody else would be welcome

to accompany me who might be willing to come to his shrine of innocence

and love in the spirit of the wise men of the East. But, lest anybody

\_should\_ inquire for me at the hospital at the first of the hours

aforesaid, this is to give warning that the White Owl has expressly

forbidden all intercourse between the members of her staff and

the discharged and dishonoured mother. Set it down to my spirit of

contradiction that I intend to disregard the mandate, though I am only

too well aware that the poor discharged and dishonoured one has no other

idea of friendship than that of a loyalty in which she shares but is not

sharing. Of course, woman is born to such selfishness as the sparks fly

upward; but if I should ever meet with a man who isn't I will just give

myself up to him--body and soul and belongings--unless he has a wife

or other encumbrance already and is booked for this world, and in that

event I will enter into my own recognisances and be bound over to him

for the next. Glory.”

At six-thirty that evening Glory stood waiting in the portico of the

hospital, but John Storm did not come. At seven she was ringing at the

bell of a little house in St. John's Wood that stood behind a high wall

and had an iron grating in the garden door. The bell was answered by a

good-natured, slack-looking servant, who was friendly, and even familiar

in a moment.

“Are you the young lady from the hospital? The missis told me about you.

I'm Liza, and come upstairs--Yes, doing nicely, thank you, both of 'em

is--and mind your head, miss.”

Polly was in a little bandbox of a bedroom, looking more pink and white

than ever against the linen of her frilled pillow slips. By the bedside

a woman of uncertain age in deep mourning, with little twinkling eyes

and fat cheeks, was rocking the baby on her knee and babbling over it in

words of maudlin endearment.

“Bless it, 'ow it do notice! Boo-loo-loo!”

Glory leaned over the little one and pronounced it the prettiest baby

she had ever seen.

“Syme 'ere miss. There ain't sech another in all London! It's jest the

sort of baby you can love. Pore little thing, it's quite took to me

already, as if it wanted to enkirridge you, my dear.”

“This is Mrs. Jupe,” said Polly, “and she's going to take baby to

nurse.”

“Boo-loo-loo-boo! And a nice new cradle's awaiting of it afront of the

fire in my little back parlour. Boo-loo!”

“But surely you're never going to part with your baby!” said Glory.

“Why, what do you suppose, dear? Do you think I'm going to be tied to

a child all my days, and never be able to go anywhere or do anything or

amuse myself at all?”

“Jest that. It'll be to our mootual benefit, as I said when I answered

your advertisement.”

Glory asked the woman if she was married and had any children of her

own.

“Me, miss? I've been married eleven years, and I've allwiz prayed the

dear Lord to gimme childring. Got any? On'y one little girl; but I want

to adopt another from the birth, so as to have something to love when my

own's growed up.”

Glory supposed that Polly could see her baby at any time, but the woman

answered doubtfully:

“Can she see baby? Well, I would rather not, certingly. If I tyke it

I want to feel it is syme as my very own and do my dooty by it, pore

thing! And if the mother were coming and going I should allwiz feel as

she 'ad the first claim.”

Polly showed no interest in the conversation until Mrs. Jupe asked for

the name of her “friend,” in lieu of eighty pounds that were to be paid

down on delivery of the child.

“Come, myke up your mind, my dear, and let me tyke it away at onct. Give

me 'is nyme, that's good enough for me.”

After some hesitation Glory gave Lord Robert's name and address, and the

woman prepared the child for its departure.

“Don't tyke on so, my dear. 'Tain't sech a great crime, and many a laidy

of serciety 'as done worse.”

At the street door Glory asked Mrs. Jupe for her own address, and the

woman gave her a card, saying if she ever wanted to leave the hospital

it would be easy to help such a fine-looking young woman as she was to

make a bit of living for herself.

Polly recovered speedily from the trouble of the child's departure,

and presently assumed an easy and almost patronizing tone toward Glory,

pretending to be amused and even a little indignant when asked how soon

she expected to be fit for business again, and able to do without Lord

Robert's assistance.

“To tell you the truth,” she said, “I was as much to blame as he was. I

wanted to escape from the drudgery of the hospital, and I knew he would

take me when the time came.”

Glory left early, vowing in her heart she would come no more. When she

changed her omnibus at Piccadilly the Circus was very full of women.

“Letter for you, nurse,” said the porter as she entered the hospital. It

was from John Storm.

“Dear Glory: I have at length decided to enter the Brotherhood at

Bishopsgate Street, and I am to go into the monastery this evening. It

is not as a visitor that I am going this time, but as a postulant or

novice and in the hope of becoming worthy in due course to take the vows

of lifelong consecration. Therefore I am writing to you probably for the

last time, and parting from you perhaps forever.

“Since we came up to London together I have suffered many shocks and

disappointments, and I seem to have been torn in ribbons. My cherished

dreams have proved to be delusions; the palaces I had built up for

myself have turned out to be pasteboard, gilt, and rubbish; I have been

robbed of all my jewels, or they have shown themselves to be shingle

stones. In this condition of shame and disillusionment I am now resolved

to escape at the same time from the world and from myself, for I am

tired of both alike, and already I feel as if a great weight had been

lifted off me.

“But I wish to speak of you. You must have thought me cantankerous, and

so I have been sometimes, but always by conviction and on principle. I

could not countenance the fashionable morality that is corrupting the

manhood of the laity, or endure the toleration that is making the clergy

thoroughly wicked; I could not without a pang see you cater to the

world's appetites or be drawn into its gaieties and frivolities; and it

was agony to me to fear that a girl of your pure if passionate nature

might perhaps fall a victim to a gamester in life's follies--an actor

indulging a pastime--a mere cheat.

“And what you tell me of your friend's altered circumstances does not

relieve me of such anxieties. The man who has deceived a girl once is

likely to deceive her again. Short of marriage itself, such connections

should be cut off entirely, whatever the price. When they are maintained

in relations of liberty the victim is sure to be further victimized, and

her last state is always worse than the first.

“However, I do not wish to blame anybody, least of all you, who have

done everything for the best, and especially now when I am parting from

you forever. You have never realized how much you have been to me, and

I doubt if I knew it myself until to-day. You know how I was brought

up--with a solitary old man--God be with him!--who tried to be good to

me for the sake of his ambitions, and to love me for the sake of his

revenge. I never knew my mother, I never had a sister, and I can never

have a wife. You were all three to me and yourself besides. There were

no women in our household, and you stood for woman in my life. I have

never told you this before, but now I tell it as a dying man whispers

his secret with his parting breath.

“I have written my letters of farewell--one to my father, asking his

forgiveness if I have done him any wrong; one to my uncle, with my love

and thanks; and one to your good old grandfather, giving up my solemn

and sacred trust of you. My conduct will of course be condemned as

weak and foolish from many points of view, but by my departure some

difficulties will be removed, and for the rest I have come to see that

everything is done by the spirit and nothing by the flesh, and that by

prayer and fasting I can help and protect you more than by counsel and

advice. Thus everything is for the best.

“The rule under which the Brothers live in community forbids them to

write and receive letters without special permission, or even to think

too constantly of the world outside; and now that I am on the eve of

that new life, memories of the old one keep crowding on me as on a

drowning man. But they are all of one period--the days when we were at

Peel in your sweet little island, before the vain and cruel world came

in between us, when you were a simple, merry girl, and I was little more

than a happy boy, and we went plunging and laughing through your bright

blue sea together.

“But earth's joys grow very dim and its glories are fading. That also is

for the best. I have my Koh-i-noor--my desire to depart and surrender my

life to God. John Storm.”

“Anything wrong, nurse? Feeling ill, ain't ye? Only dizzy a bit?

Unpleasant news from home, perhaps?”

“No, something else. Let me sit in your room, porter.”

She read the letter again and again, until the words seemed blurred and

the lines irregular as a spider's web. Then she thought: “We can not

part forever like this. I must see him again whatever happens. Perhaps

he has not yet gone.”

It was now half-past eight and time to go on duty, but she went upstairs

to Sister Allworthy and asked for an hour's further leave. The request

was promptly refused. She went downstairs to the matron and asked for

half an hour, only that she might see a friend away on a long journey,

and that was refused too. Then she tightened her quivering lips,

returned to the porter's room, fixed her bonnet on before the scratched

pier-glass, and boldly walked out of the hospital.

It was now quite dark and the fashionable dinner hour of Belgravia, and

as she hurried through the streets many crested and coroneted carriages

drew up at the great mansions and discharged their occupants in evening

dress. The canon's house was brilliantly lighted, and when the door was

opened in answer to her knock she could see the canon himself at the

head of his own detachment of diners coming downstairs with a lady in

white silk chatting affably on his arm.

“Is Mr. Storm at home?”

The footman, in powdered wig and white cotton gloves, answered

haltingly. “If it is--er--anything about the hospital, miss,

Mr.--er--Golightly will attend.”

“No, it is Mr. Storm himself I wish to see.”

“Gorn!” said the footman, and he shut the door in her face.

She had an impulse to hammer on the door with her hand, and command

the flunky to go down on his knees and beg her pardon. But what was the

good? She had no time to think of herself now.

As a last resource she would go to Bishopsgate. How dense the traffic

seemed to be at Victoria! She had never felt so helpless before.

It was better in the city, and as she walked eastward, in the direction

indicated by a policeman, every step brought her into quieter streets.

She was now in that part of London which is the world's busiest

market-place by day, but is shut up and deserted at night. Her light

footsteps echoed against the shutters of the shops. The moon had risen,

and she could see far down the empty street.

She found the place at last. It was one of London's weather-beaten old

churches, shouldered by shops on either hand, and almost pushed back by

the tide of traffic. There was an iron gate at the side, leading by

an arched passage to a little courtyard, which was bounded by two high

blank walls, by the back wall of the church, and by the front of a large

house with a small doorway and many small windows. In the middle of the

courtyard there was a tree with a wooden seat round its trunk.

And being there, she felt afraid and almost wished she had not come.

The church was dimly lighted, and she thought perhaps the cleaners were

within. But presently there was a sound of singing, in men's voices

only, and without any kind of musical accompaniment. Just then the clock

in the steeple struck nine, and chimes began to play:

Days and moments quickly flying.

The singing came to an end, and there was some low, inarticulate

droning, and then a general “Amen.” The hammer of the bell continued

to beat out its hymn, and Glory stood under the shadow of the tree to

collect her thoughts.

Then the sacristy door opened and a line of men came out. They were in

long black cassocks, and they crossed the courtyard from the church

to the house with the measured and hasty step of monks, and with their

hands clasped at their breasts. Almost at the end of the line, walking

with an old man whose tread was heavy, there was a younger one who was

bareheaded, and who did not wear the cassock. The moon threw a light on

his face, which looked pale and worn. It was John Storm.

Glory gave a faint cry, a gasp, and he turned round as if startled.

“Only the creaking of the sycamore,” said the Superior. And then the

mysterious shadows took them; they passed into the house, the door was

closed, and she was alone with the chimes:

Days and moments quickly flying,

Blend the living with the dead.

Glory's strength had deserted her, and she went away as she came. When

she got back to Victoria, she felt for the first time as if her own

little life had been swallowed up in the turmoil of London, and she had

gone down to the cold depths of an icy sea.

It was a quarter to ten when she returned to the ward, and the matron,

with her dog on her lap, was waiting to receive her.

“Didn't I tell you that you could not go out to-night?”

“Yes, ma'am,” said Glory.

“Then how did you dare to go?”

Glory looked at her unwaveringly, with glittering eyes that seemed to

smile, whereupon the matron picked up her dog, gathered up her train,

and swept out of the ward, saying:

“Nurse, you can leave me at the end of your term; and you need never

cross the doors of this institution again.”

Then Glory, who had all night wanted to cry, burst into laughter. The

ward Sister reproved her, but she laughed in the woman's fat face, and

would have given worlds to slap it.

There was not a nurse in the hospital who showed more bright and

cheerful spirits when the patients were being prepared for the night.

But next morning, in the gray dawn, when she had dragged herself to bed,

and was able at length to be alone, she beat the pillows with both hands

and sobbed in her loneliness and shame.

XX.

But youth is rich in hope, and at noon, when Glory awoke, the thought of

Drake flashed upon her like light in a dark place. He had compelled Lord

Robert to assist Polly in a worse extremity, and he would assist her in

her present predicament. How often he had hinted that the hospital was

not good enough for her, and that some day and somewhere Fate would

find other work for her and another sphere. The time had come; she would

appeal to him, and he would hasten to help her.

She began to revive the magnificent dreams that had floated in her mind

for months. No need to tell the people at home of her dismissal and

disgrace; no need to go back to the island. She would be somebody in

her own right yet. Of course, she would have to study, to struggle, to

endure disappointments, but she would triumph in the end. And when at

length she was great and famous she would be good to other poor girls;

and as often as she thought of John Storm in his solitude in his cell,

though there might be a pang, a red stream running somewhere within,

she would comfort herself with the thought that she, too, was doing her

best; she, too, had her place, and it was a useful and worthy one.

Before that time came, however, there would be managers to influence and

engagements to seek, and perhaps teachers to pay for. But Drake was rich

and generous and powerful; he had a great opinion of her talents, and he

would stop at nothing.

Leaping out of bed, she sat down at the table as she was and wrote to

him:

“Dear Mr. Drake: Try to see me to-night. I want your advice immediately.

What do you think? I have got myself 'noticed' at last, and as a

consequence I am to leave at the end of my term. So things are urgent,

you see. I 'wave my lily hand' to you. Glory.

“P.S.--save time I suggest the hour and the place: eight o'clock, St.

James's Park, by the bridge going down from Marlborough House.”

Drake received this note as he was sitting alone in his chambers smoking

a cigarette after drinking a cup of tea, in that hour of glamour that

is between the lights. It seemed to bring with it a secret breath of

passion out of the atmosphere in which it had been written. At the first

impulse it went up to his lips, but at the next moment he was smitten

by the memory of something, and he thought: “I will do what is right; I

will play the game fair.”

He dined that night with a group of civil servants at his club in St.

James's Street, but at a quarter to eight, notwithstanding some playful

bantering, he put on his overcoat and turned toward the park. The autumn

night was soft and peaceful; the stars were out and the moon had risen;

a fragrant mist came up from the lake, and the smoke of his cigar was

hardly troubled by the breeze that pattered the withered tassels of

the laburnums. Big Ben was striking eight as he reached the end of the

little bridge, and almost immediately afterward he was aware of soft and

hurrying footsteps approaching him.

Glory had come down by the Mall. The whispering of the big white trees

in the moonlight was like company, and she sang to herself as she

walked. Her heart seemed to have gone into her heels since yesterday,

for her step was light and sometimes she ran a few paces. She arrived

out of breath as the great clock was striking, and seeing the figure of

a gentleman in evening dress by the end of the bridge, she stopped to

collect herself.

Her hand was hot and a little damp when Drake took it, and her face was

somewhat flushed. She had all at once become ashamed that she had come

to ask him for anything, and she took out her pocket-handkerchief and

began to roll it in her palms. He misunderstood her agitation, and

trying to cover it he offered her his arm and took her across the

bridge, and they turned westward down the path that runs along the

margin of the lake.

“Mr. Storm has gone,” she said, thinking to explain herself.

“I know,” he answered.

“Is it generally known, then?”

“I had a letter from him yesterday.”

“Was it about me?”

“Yes.”

“You must not mind if he says things, you know.”

“I don't, Glory. I set them down to the egotism of the religious man.

The religious man can not believe that anybody can live a moral life and

act on principle except from the religious impulse.... I suppose he has

warned you against me, hasn't he?”

“Well--yes.”

“I'm at a loss to know what I've done to deserve it. But time must

justify me. I am not a religious man myself, you know, though I hate

to talk of it. To tell you the truth, I think the religious idea a

monstrous egotism altogether, and the love of God merely the love of

self. Still, you must judge for yourself, Glory.”

“Are we not wasting our time a little?” she said. “I am here; isn't that

proof enough of my opinion?” And then in an agitated whisper she added:

“I have only half an hour, the gates will be closing, and I want to ask

your advice, you know. You remember what I told you in my letter?”

He patted the hand on his arm and said, “Tell me how it happened.”

She told him everything, with many pauses, expecting every moment that

he would break in upon her and say, “Why didn't you box the woman's

ears?” or perhaps laugh and assure her that it did not matter in the

least, and she was making too much of a mere bagatelle. But he listened

to every syllable, and after she had finished there was silence for

a moment. Then he said: “I'm sorry--very sorry; in fact, I am much

troubled about it.”

Her nerves were throbbing hard and her hand on his arm was twitching.

“If you had left of your own accord after that scene in the board room,

it would have been so different--so easy for me to help you!”

“How?”

“I should have spoken to my chief--he is a governor of many

hospitals--and said, 'A young friend of mine, a nurse, is uncomfortable

in her present place and would like to change her hospital.' It would

have been no sooner said than done. But now--now there is the black book

against you, and God knows if ... In fact, somebody has laid a trap for

you, Glory, intending to get rid of you at the first opportunity, and

you seem to have walked straight into it.”

She felt stunned. “He has forgotten all he has said to me,” she thought.

In a feeble, expressionless voice she asked:

“But what am I to do now?”

“Let me think.”

They walked some steps in silence. “He is turning it over,” she thought.

“He will tell me how to begin.”

He stopped, as if seized by a new idea.

“Did you tell them where you had been?”

“No,” she replied, in the same weak voice.

“But why not do so? There is hope in that. The chaplain was your

friend--your only friend in London, so far as they know. Surely that is

an extenuating circumstance so plausible----”

“But I cannot----”

“I know it is bitter to explain--to apologize--and if I can do it for

you----”

“I will not allow it!” she said. Her lips were set, and her breath was

coming through them in gusts.

“It is a pity to allow the hospitals to be closed against you. Nursing

is a good profession, Glory--even a fashionable one. It is true womanly

work, and----”

“That was what he said.”

“Who? John Storm? He was right. Indeed, he was an entirely honourable

and upright man, and----”

“But \_you\_ always seemed to say there were other things more worthy of a

girl, and if she had a mind to---- But no matter. We needn't talk about

the hospitals any longer. I am not fit for them and shall never go back

to them, whatever happens.”

He looked down at her. She was biting her lips, and the tears were

gathering in her eyes.

“Well, well, never mind, dear,” he said, and he patted her hand again.

The moon had begun to wane, and out of the dark shadows they walked in

they could see the lines of houses lit up all around.

“Look,” she said, with a feeble laugh, “in all this great busy London is

there nothing else I'm fit for?”

“You are fit for anything in the world, my dear,” he answered.

Her nerves were throbbing harder than ever. “Perhaps he doesn't

remember,” she thought. Should she tell him what he said so often about

her talents, and how much she might be able to make of them?

“Is there nothing a girl can do except go down on her knees to a woman?”

He laughed and talked some nonsense about the kneeling. “Poor little

woman, she doesn't know what she is doing,” he thought.

“I shouldn't mind what people thought of me,” she said, “not even my own

people, who have been brought up with such narrow ideas, you know.

They might think what they liked, if I felt I was in the right place at

last--the right place for me, I mean.”

Her nervous fingers were involuntarily clutching at his coat sleeve.

“Now, any other man----” he thought.

She began to cry. “He \_won't\_ remember,” she told herself. “It was

only his way of being agreeable when he praised me and predicted such

wonderful things. And now his good breeding will not allow him to tell

me there are hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of girls in London

as likely to----”

“Come, you mustn't cry, Glory. It's not so bad as that.”

She had never seemed to him so beautiful, and he wanted to take her in

his arms and comfort her.

“I had no one but you to come to,” she murmured in her confusion. But

she was thinking: “Why didn't you stop me before? Why have you let me go

on all these months?”

“I must try to think of something, and I'll speak to my friend

Rosa--Miss Macquarrie, you know.”

“You are a man,” said Glory, “and I thought perhaps----” But she could

not speak of her fool's paradise now, she was so deeply ashamed and

abased.

“That's just the difficulty, my dear. If I were not a man, I might so

easily help you.”

What did he mean? The frogs kept croaking at the margin of the lake,

disturbed by the sound of their footsteps.

“Whatever you were to tell me to do I should do it,” she said, in

the same confused murmur. She was ruining herself with every word she

uttered.

He drew up and stood before her, so close that she could feel his

breath, on her face. “My dear Glory,” he said passionately, “don't think

it isn't terrible to me to renounce the happiness of helping you, but I

must not, I dare not, I will not take it.”

She could scarcely breathe for the shame that took sudden hold of her.

“Heaven knows I would give anything to have the joy of looking after

your happiness, dear, but I should despise myself forever if I took

advantage of your circumstances.”

Good God! What did he think she had been asking of him?

“I am thinking of yourself, Glory, because I want to esteem you

and honour you, and because your good name is above everything

else--everything else in the world.”

Her shame was now abject. It stifled her, deafened her, blinded her. She

could not speak or hear or see.

He took her hand and pressed it.

“Let me go,” she stammered.

“Stay--do not go yet!”

“Let me go, will you?”

“One moment----”

But with a cry like the cry of a startled bird she disappeared in the

shadow of the trees.

He stood a moment where she had left him, tingling in every nerve,

wanting to follow her, and overtake her, and kiss her, and abandon

everything. But he buttoned up his overcoat and turned away, telling

himself that whatever another man might have done in the same case he at

least had done rightly, and that men like John Storm were wrong if they

thought it was impossible to act on principle without the impulse of

religion.

Meanwhile Glory was flying through the darkness and weeping in the

bitterness of her disappointment and shame. The big trees overhead were

all black now and very gaunt and grim, and the breeze was moaning in

their branches.

“I had disgrace enough already,” she thought; “I might have spared

myself a degradation like this!”

Drake had supposed that she came to plead for herself to-night as she

had pleaded for Polly a week ago. How natural that he should think so!

How natural and yet how hideous!

“I hate him! I hate him!” she thought.

John Storm had been right. In their heart of hearts these men of society

had only one idea about a girl, and she had stumbled on it unawares.

They never thought of her as a friend and an equal, but only as a

dependent and a plaything, to be taken or left as they liked.

“Oh, how shameful to be a woman--how shameful, how shameful!”

And Drake had renounced her! In the hideous tangle of his error he had

renounced her! For honour's sake, and her own sake, and for sake of

his character as a gentleman--renounced her! Oh, there was somebody who

would never have renounced her whatever had happened, and yet she had

driven him away, and he was gone forever!

“I hate myself! I hate myself!”

She remembered how often out of recklessness and daring and high

spirits, but without a thought of evil, she had broken through the

barrier of manners and given Drake occasion to think lightly of her--at

the ball, at the theatre, at tea in his chambers, and by dressing

herself up as a man.

“I hate myself! I hate myself!”

John Storm was right, and Drake in his different way was right too, and

she alone had been to blame. But Fate was laughing at her, and the jest

was very, very cruel.

“No matter. It is all for the best,” she thought. She would be the

stronger for this experience--the stronger and the purer too, to stand

alone and to face the future.

She got back to the hospital just as the great clock of Westminster was

chiming the half-hour, and she stood a moment on the steps to listen to

it. Only half an hour had passed, and yet all the world had changed!

XXI.

It was the last day of Glory's probation, and, dressed in the long blue

ulster in which she came from the Isle of Man, she was standing in

the matron's room waiting for her wages and discharge. The matron was

sitting sideways at her table, with her dog snarling in her lap. She

pointed to a tiny heap of gold and silver and to a foolscap paper which

lay beside it.

“That is your month's salary, nurse, and this is your 'character.' The

'character' has given me a deal of trouble. I have done all I could for

you. I have said you were bright and cheerful, and that the patients

liked you. I trust I have not committed myself too far.”

Glory gathered up the money, but left the “character” untouched.

“You need not be anxious, ma'am; I shall not require it.”

“Have you got a situation?”

“No.”

“Then where are you going next?”

“I don't know--yet.”

“How much money have you saved?”

“About three months' wages.”

“Only three pounds altogether!”

“It will be quite sufficient.”

“What friends have you got in London?”

“None--that is to say--no, none whatever.”

“Then why don't you go back to your island?”

“Because I don't wish to be a burden upon my people, and because earning

my living in London doesn't depend on the will or the whim of any

woman.”

“That's just like you. I might have dismissed you instantly, but for the

sake of the chaplain I've borne with your rudeness and irregularities,

and even tried to be your friend, and yet---- I dare say you've not even

told your people why you are leaving the hospital?”

“I haven't--I haven't told them yet that I'm leaving at all.”

“Then I've a great mind to do it for you. A venturesome, headstrong girl

who flings herself on London is in danger of ruin.”

“You needn't trouble yourself, ma'am,” said Glory, opening the door to

go.

“Why so?” said the matron.

Glory stood at her full height and answered:

“Because if you said that of me there is nobody in the world would

believe you!”

Her box had been brought down to the hall, and the porter, who wished to

be friendly, was cording it.

“May I leave it in your care, porter, until I am able to call for it?”

“Certingly, nurse. Sorry you're goin'. I'll miss your face, too.”

“Thank you. I'll call for my letters also.”

“There's one just come.”

It was from Aunt Anna, and was full of severe reproof and admonition.

Glory was not to think of leaving the hospital; she must try to be

content with the condition to which God had called her. But why had her

letters been so few of late? and how did it occur that she had never

told them about Mr. Storm? He had gone for good into that strange

Brotherhood, it seemed. Not Catholic, and yet a monastery. Most

extraordinary! They were all eagerly waiting to hear more about it.

Besides, the grandfather was anxious on Glory's account. If half they

heard was true, the dangers of London----

The house-surgeon came down to say good-bye. He had always been as free

and friendly as Sister Allworthy would allow. They stood a moment at the

door together.

“Where are you going to?” he asked.

“Anywhere--nowhere--everywhere; to 'all the airts the wind can blaw.'”

It was a clear, bright morning, with a light, keen frost. On looking

out, Glory saw that flags were flying on the public buildings.

“Why, what's going on?” she said.

“Don't you know? It's the ninth of November--Lord Mayor's Day.”

She laughed merrily. “A good omen. I'm the female Dick Whittington! Here

goes for it! Good-bye, hospital nursing.--By-bye, doctor.”

She dropped him a playful curtsy at the bottom of the steps, and then

tripped along the street.

“What a girl it is!” he thought. “And what is to become of her in this

merciless old London?”

She had taken less than a score of steps from the hospital when blinding

teardrops leaped from her eyes and ran down her cheeks; but she only

dropped her veil and walked on boldly.

SECOND BOOK.

\_THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.\_

I.

The Society of the Holy Gethsemane, popularly called the Bishopsgate

Fathers, was one of the many conventual institutions of the English

Church which came as a sequel to the great upheaval of religious feeling

known as the Tractarian or Oxford movement. Most of them gave way under

the pressure of external opposition, some of them broke down under

the strain of internal dissension, and a few lived on as secret

brotherhoods, in obedience to a rule which was never divulged by their

members, who were said to wear a hair shirt next the skin and to scourge

themselves with the lash of discipline.

Of these conventual institutions the Society of the Holy Gethsemane had

been one of the earliest, and it was now quite the oldest, although it

had challenged not only the traditions of the Reformed Church but the

spirit of the age itself by establishing its place of prayer at the

very doors of the Stock Exchange--that crater of volcanic emotions, that

generating house for the electric currents of the world.

Its founder and first Superior had been a man of iron will, who had

fought his way through ecclesiastical courts and popular anger, and even

family persecution, which had culminated in an effort of his own

brother to shut him up as a lunatic. His first disciple and most stanch

supporter had been the Rev. Charles Frederic Lamplugh, a fellow of

Corpus, newly called to orders after an earlier career which had been

devoted to the world, and, according to rumour, nearly wrecked in an

affair of the heart.

When the community had proved its legal right to exist within the

Establishment and public clamour had subsided, this disciple was

despatched to America, and there he established a branch brotherhood and

became great and famous. At the height of his usefulness and renown he

was recalled, and this exercise of authority provoked a universal outcry

among his admirers. But he obeyed; he left his fame and glory in America

and returned to his cell in London, and was no more heard of by the

outer world until the founder of the society died, when he was elected

by the brothers to the vacant place of Superior.

Father Lamplugh was now a man of seventy, so gentle in his manner, so

sweet in his temper, so pious in his life, that when he stepped out of

his room to greet John Storm on his arrival in Bishopsgate Street it

seemed as if he brought the air of heaven in the rustle of his habit,

and to have come from the holy of holies.

“Welcome! welcome!” he said. “I knew you would come to us; I have been

expecting you. The first time I saw you I said to myself: 'Here is one

who bears a burden; the world can not satisfy the cravings of a heart

like that; he will surrender it some day.'”

Having been there before, though in “Retreat” only, he entered at once

into the life of the Brotherhood. It was arranged that he was to spend

some two or three months as postulant, then to take the vow of a novice

for one year, and finally, if he proved his vocation, to seal and

establish his calling by taking the three life vows of poverty,

chastity, and obedience.

The home of the Brotherhood was one of those old London mansions in

the heart of the city, which were built perhaps for the palaces of

dignitaries of the Church, and were afterward occupied as the houses and

offices of London merchants and their apprentices, and have eventually

descended to the condition of warehouses and stores and tenement

dwellings for the poor. Its structure remained the same, but the

brothers made no effort to support its ancient grandeur. Nothing more

simple can be imagined than the appointments of their monastery. The

carved-oak staircase was there, but the stairs wore carpetless, and the

panelled and parqueted hall was bare of ornament, except for a picture,

in a pale oaken frame, of the head of Christ in its crown of thorns. A

plain clock in a deal case was nailed up under the floral cornice,

and beneath it there hung the text: “Lord, who shall dwell in thy

tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth

an uncorrupt life.” The old dining-room was now the community room, the

old kitchen was the refectory, the spacious bedrooms were partitioned

into cells, and the corridors, which had once been covered with

tapestry, were now coated with whitewash, and bore the inscription,

“Silence in the passages.”

In this house of poverty and dignity, of past grandeur and present

simplicity, the brothers lived in community. They were forty in number,

consisting of ten lay brothers, ten novices, and twenty professed

Fathers. The lay brothers, who were under the special direction of their

own Superior, the Father Minister, and were rarely allowed to go into

the street, had to clean the house and bake the bread and cook and

serve the food which was delivered at the door, and thus, in that narrow

circle of duty, they proved their piety by their devotion to a lot which

condemned them to scour and scrub to the last day of life. The clerical

brothers, who were nearly all in full orders, enjoyed a more varied

existence, being confined to the precincts only during a part of their

novitiate, and then sent out at the will of the Superior to preach

in the churches of London or the country, and even despatched on

expeditions to establish missions abroad.

The lay brothers had their separate retiring room, but John Storm met

his clerical housemates on the night of his arrival. It was the hour

of evening recreation, and they were gathered in the community room for

reading and conversation. The stately old dining-room was as destitute

as the corridors of adornments or even furniture. Straw armchairs stood

on the clean, white floor; a bookcase, containing many volumes of

the Fathers, lined one of the panelled walls; and over the majestic

fireplace there was a plain card with the inscription, “There be eunuchs

which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.”

The brothers gathered about him and examined him with a curiosity which

was more than personal. To this group of men, detached from life, the

arrival of some one from the outer world was an event of interest.

He knew what wars had been waged, what epidemics were raging, what

Governments had risen and fallen. He might not speak of these things in

casual talk, for it was against rule to discuss, for its own sake, what

had been seen or heard outside, but they were in the air about him, and

they were happening on the other side of the wall.

And he on his part also examined his housemates, and; tried to guess

what manner of men they were and what had brought them to that place.

They were men of all ages, and nearly every school of the Church had

sent its representatives. Here was the pale face of the ascetic, and

there the guileless eyes of the saint. Some were keen and alert, others

were timid and slow. All wore the long black cassock of the community,

and many wore the rope with three knots. They spoke little of the world

outside, but it was clear that they could not dismiss it from their

thoughts. Their talk was cheerful, and the Father told stories of

his preaching expeditions which provoked some laughter. They had no

newspapers (except one well-known High-Church organ) and no games, and

there was no smoking.

The bell rang for supper, and they went down to the refectory. It was

a large apartment in the basement, and it still bore the emblems of its

ancient service. Over the great kitchen ingle there was yet another card

with the inscription, “Neither said any of them that aught of the things

which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.” A

table, scoured white, ran round three sides of the room, the seats were

forms without backs, and there was one chair--the Superior's chair--in

the middle.

The supper consisted of porridge and milk and brown bread, and it was

eaten out of plates and cans of pewter. While it lasted one of the

brothers, seated at a raised desk, read first a few passages of

Scripture, and then some pages, of a secular book which the religious

were thus hearing at their meals. The supper was hardly over when the

bell rang again. It was time for Compline, the last service of the

day, and the brothers formed in procession and passed out of the house,

across the courtyard, into the little church.

The old place was dimly lighted, but the brothers occupied the chancel

only. They sat in two companies on opposite sides of the choir, in three

rows of stalls, the lay brothers in front, the novices next, and the

Fathers at the back. Each side had its leader in the recitation of

the prayers. The Miserere was said kneeling, the Psalms were sung

with frequent pauses, each of the duration of the words “Ave Maria,”

producing the effect of a broken wail. The service was short, and it

ended with “May the Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect

end.” There was another stroke of the bell, and the brothers returned to

the house in silence.

John Storm walked with the Superior, and passing through the courtyard,

in the light of the moon that had risen while they were at prayers, he

was startled by the sound of something.

“Only the creaking of the sycamore,” said the Father.

He had thought it was the voice of Glory, but he had been hearing her

cry throughout the service, so he dismissed the circumstance as a dream.

Half an hour later the household had retired for the night, the lights

were put out, and the Society of the Gethsemane was at rest.

John's cell was on the topmost floor, next to the quarters of the lay

brothers. There was nothing above it but a high lead flat, which was

sometimes used by the religious as watch-tower and breathing place.

The cell was a narrow room with bare floor, a small table, one chair, a

prayingstool, a crucifix, and a stump bed, having a straw pillow and a

crimson coverlet marked with a large white cross.

“Here,” he thought, “my journey is at an end. This is my resting-place

for life.” The mighty hand of the Church was on him and he felt a deep

peace. He was like a ship that had been tossed at sea and was lying

quiet in harbour at last.

Without was the world, the fantastic world, forever changing; within

were gentle if strict rules and customs securely fixed. Without was the

ceaseless ebb and flow of the financial tide; within were content and

sweet poverty and no disturbing fears. Without were struggle and strife

and the fever of gain; within were peace and happiness and the grand

mysteries which God reveals to the soul in solitude.

He began to pass his life in review and to think: “Well, it is all over,

at all events. I shall never leave this place. Friends who forgive me,

good-bye! And foes who are unforgiving, good-bye to you too!

“And the world--the great, vain, cruel, hypocritical world--farewell

to it also! Farewell to its pomp and its glory! Farewell to life, and

liberty, and--love----”

The wind was rustling the leaves of the tree in the courtyard, and he

could not help but hear again the voice he had heard when crossing from

the church. His eyes were closed, but Glory's face, with its curling

and twitching lip and its laughing and liquid eyes, was printed on the

darkness.

“Ave Maria,” he murmured; and saying this again and again, he fell

asleep.

Next morning the daylight had not quite dawned when he was awakened by a

knock at his door and a low voice saying, “Benedicamus Domino!”

It was the Father Superior, who made it his rule to rouse the household

himself, on the principle of “whosoever will be chief among you, let him

be your servant.”

“Deo Gratias,” he answered, and the voice went on through the corridor.

Then the bell rang for Lauds and Prime, and John left his cell to begin

his life as Brother Storm.

II.

Though it was against the rule of the Order to indulge in particular

friendships, yet in obedience to the rule of Nature he made friends

among the brothers. His feeling for the Superior became stronger than

love and approached to adoration, and there were certain of the Fathers

to whom his heart went out with a tender sympathy. The Father Minister

was a man of a hard, closed soul, very cantankerous and severe; but the

rest were gentle and timid men for the most part, with a wistful outlook

on the world.

It was due in part to the proximity of his cell to the quarters assigned

to the lay brothers that his two closest friendships were made among

them. One was with a great creature, like an overgrown boy, who kept the

door to the monastery by day, and alternated that duty with another by

night. He was called Brother Andrew--for the lay brothers were known by

their Christian names--and he was one of those characterless beings who

are only happy when they have merged their individuality in another's

and joined their fate to his. He attached himself to John from the

first, and as often as he was at liberty he was hanging about him, ready

to fetch and carry in his shambling gait, which was like the roll of an

old dog. The expression of his beardless face was that of a boy, and he

had no conversation, for he always agreed with everything that was said

to him.

The other of John's friendships was with the lay brother whom he had

known outside--the brother of Polly Love--but this was a friendship of

slower growth, impeded by a tragic obstacle. John had seen him first in

the refectory on the night of his arrival, and observed in his face the

marks of suffering and exhaustion. At various times afterward he had

seen him in the church and encountered him in the corridors, and had

sometimes bowed to him and smiled, but the brother had never once given

sign of recognition. At length he had begun to doubt his identity,

and one morning, going upstairs from breakfast side by side with the

Superior, he said:

“Father, is the lay brother with the melancholy eyes and the pale face

the one whom I knew at the hospital?”

“Yes,” said the Father; “but he is under the rule of silence.”

“Ah! Does he know what has become of his sister?”

“No.”

It was the morning hour of recreation, and the Father drew John into the

courtyard and talked of Brother Paul.

He was much tormented by thoughts of the world without, and being a

young man of a weak nervous system and a consumptive tendency, such

struggles with the evil one were hurtful to him. Therefore, though it

was the rule that a lay brother should not be consecrated until after

long years of service, it had been decided that he should take the vows

immediately, in order that Satan might yield up his hold of him and the

world might drag at him no more.

“Is that your experience?” said John; “when a religious has taken the

vows, are his thoughts of the world all conquered?”

“He is like the sailor making ready for his voyage. As long as he lies

in harbour his thoughts are of the home he has left behind him; but when

he has once crossed the bar and is out on the ocean he thinks only of

the haven where he would be.”

“But are there no backward glances, Father? The sailor may write to the

friends he has parted from--surely the religious may pray for them.”

“As brothers and sisters of the spirit, yes, always and at all times; as

brothers and sisters of the flesh, no, never, save in hours of especial

need. He is the spouse of Christ, my son, and all Christ's children are

his kindred equally.”

As a last word the Father begged of John to abstain from reference to

anything that had happened at the hospital, lest Brother Paul might hear

of it and manifold evils be the result.

The warning seemed needless. From that day forward John tried to avoid

Brother Paul. In church and in the refectory he kept his eyes away from

him. He could not see that worn face, with its hungry look, and not

think of a captured eagle with a broken wing. It was with a shock that

he discovered that their cells were side by side. If they came near to

each other in the corridors he experienced a kind of terror, and was

thankful for the rule of silence which forbade them to speak. Under the

smouldering ashes there might be coals of fire which only wanted a puff

to fan them into flame.

They came face to face at last. It was on the lead flat of the tower

above their cells. John had grown accustomed to go there after Compline,

that he might look on London from that eminence and thank God that he

had escaped from its clutches. The stars were out, and the city lay like

a great monster around and beneath. Something demoniacal had entered

into his view of it. Down there was the river, winding like a serpent

through its sand, and here and there were the bridges, like the scales

across it, and farther west was the head of the great creature, just

beginning to be ablaze with lights.

“She is there,” he thought, and then he was startled by a sound. Had

he uttered the words aloud? But it was some one else who had spoken.

Brother Paul was standing by the parapet with his eyes in the same

direction. When he became conscious that John was behind him he

stammered something in his confusion, and than hurried away as if he had

been detected in a crime.

“God pity him!” thought John. “If he only knew what has happened!”

Going back to his cell, he began to think of Glory. By the broken

links of memory he remembered for the first time, since coming into the

monastery, the condition of insecurity in which he had left her. How

uncertain her position at the hospital, how perilous her relations with

her friend!

The last prayer of the day for the brothers of the Gethsemane was the

prayer before the crucifix by the side of the bed: “Thanks be to God for

giving me the trials of this day!” To this he added another petition:

“And bless and protect her wheresoever she may be!”

He ceased to frequent the tower after that, and did not go up to it

again until the morning of the day on which he was to make his vows. By

this time his soul had spent itself so prodigally in prayer that he

had almost begun to regard himself as one already in another world. The

morning was clear and frosty, and he could see that something unusual

was taking place on the earth below. Traffic was stopped, the open

spaces were crowded, and processions were passing through the streets

with bands of music playing and banners flying. Then he remembered what

day it was--it was Lord Mayor's Day, the 9th of November--and once again

he thought of Glory. She would be there, for her heart was light and she

loved the world and all its scenes of gaiety and splendour.

It was the day of his final preparation, and he was under the rule of

silence, so he returned to his cell and shut the door. But he could not

shut out the sounds of the streets. All day long the bands were playing

and the horses prancing, and there was the tramp of many feet. And even

in the last hour before the ceremony, when he was on his knees in front

of the crucifix and the palms of his hands were pressed against his

face, he could see the gay spectacle and the surging throngs--the men,

the women, the children in every window, on every parapet, and Glory in

the midst of them with her laughing lips and her sparkling eyes.

Night brought peace with it at length, and then the bell rang and he

went down to service. The brothers were waiting for him in the hall, and

they formed into line and passed into the church: first, Brother Andrew

with the cross, then Brother Paul with the incense, and the other lay

brothers with the candles, then the religious in their cassocks, and the

Superior in his cope, and John Storm last of all.

The altar was decorated as for a feast, and the service was strange

but solemn. John had drawn up in writing a promise of stability and

obedience, and this he placed with his own hand on the altar. Down to

that moment he had worn his costume as a secular priest, but now he was

to be robed in the habit of the Order.

The Father stood on the altar steps with the habit lying at his feet. He

took it up and blessed it and then put it on John, saying as he bound

it with the cord, “Take this cord and wear it in memory of the purity

of heart wherewith you must ever hereafter seek to abide in the love and

service of our Lord Jesus.”

At that moment a door was suddenly and loudly slammed, to signify that

the world was being shut out; the choir said the Gloria Patri, and then

sang a hymn beginning:

Farewell, thou world of sorrow,

Unrest, and schism and strife!

I leave thee on the threshold

Of the celestial life.

It was the occasion of Brother Paul's life vows also, and as John stood

back from the altar steps the lay brother was brought up to them. He was

very pale and nervous, and he would have stumbled but for the help of

the Father Minister and Brother Andrew, who walked on either side of

him.

Then the same ceremony was gone through again, but with yet more solemn

accessories. The burial service was read, the De Profundis was sung, the

bell was tolled, the Ecce quam bonum was intoned, and finally the chant

was chanted:

Dead to Him, then death is over,

Dead and gone are death's dark fears.

John Storm was profoundly stirred. The heavens seemed to open and all

the earth to pass away. It was difficult to believe that he was still in

the flesh.

When he was able to collect himself he was on the tower again, but in

his cassock now and gripping the cord by which it was tied. The

frosty air of the morning had thickened to a fog, the fog-signals were

sounding, and the mighty monster below seemed to be puffing fire from a

thousand nostrils and bellowing from a thousand throats.

Some one had come up to him. It was Brother Paul. He was talking

nervously and even pretending to laugh a little.

“I am so happy to see you here. And I am glad the silence is at an end

and I am able to tell you so.”

“Thank you,” said John, and he tried to pass him.

“I always knew you would come to us--that is to say, after the night I

heard you at the hospital--the night of the Nurses' Ball, you remember,

and the Father's visit, you know. Still, I trust there was nothing

wrong--nothing at the hospital, I mean----”

John was fumbling for the door to the dormer.

“Everybody loved you too--the patients and the nurses and everybody!

How they will miss you there! I trust you left everybody well--and happy

and--eh?”

“Good-night,” said John from the head of the stair.

There was silence for a moment, and then the brother said, in another

voice:

“Yes, I understand you. I know quite well what you mean. It is a fault

to speak of the outer world except on especial need. We have taken the

vows, too, and are pledged for life--I am, at all events. Still, if you

could have told me anything---- But I am much to blame. I must confess

my fault and do my penance.”

John was diving down the stair and hurrying into his room.

“God help him!” he thought. “And me too! God help both of us! How am

I to live if I have to hide this secret? Yet how is he to live if he

learns it?”

He sat on the bed and tried to compose himself. Yes, Brother Paul was an

object for pity. In all the moral universe there was no spectacle more

pitiable than that of a man who had left the world while his heart was

still in it. What was he doing here? What had brought him? What business

had such a one in such a place? And then his pitiful helplessness for

all the uses of life and duty! Could it be right, could it be necessary,

could it be God's wish and will?

Here was a man whose sister was in the world. She was young and vain,

and the world was gay and seductive. Without a hand to guide and guard

her, what evils might not befall? She was sunk already in shame and

degradation, and he had put it out of his power to save her. Whatever

had happened in the past, whatever might happen in the future, he was

lost to her forever. The captured eagle with the broken wing was now

chained to the wall as well. But prayer! Prayer was the bulwark of

chastity, and God was in need of no man's efforts.

John fell on his knees before the crucifix. With the broken logic of

reverie he was thinking of Glory, and Brother Paul, and Polly and Drake.

They crossed his brain and weighed upon it and went out and returned.

The night was cold, but the sweat stood on his brow in beads. In the

depths of his soul something was speaking to him, and he was trying not

to listen. He was like a blind man who had stumbled to the edge of a

precipice, and could hear the waves breaking on the rocks beneath.

When he said his last prayer that night he omitted the petition for

Glory (as duty seemed to require of him), and then found that all life

and soul and strength had gone out of it. In the middle of the night he

awoke with a sense of fright. Was it only a dream that he was dead and

buried? He raised his head in the darkness and stretched out his hand.

No, it was true. Little by little he pieced together the incidents of

the previous day. Yes, it had really happened.

“After all, I am not like Paul--I am not bound for life,” he told

himself, and then he lay back like a child and was comforted.

He was ashamed, but he could not help it; he was feeling already as if

he were a prisoner in a dungeon looking forward to his release.

III.

“5a Little Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W. C., November 9, 18--.

“Oh yiz, oh yiz, oh yiz! This is to announce to you with due pomp and

circumstance that I, Glory Quayle, am no longer at the hospital--for

the present. Did I never tell you? Have you never noticed it in the

regulations? Every half-year a nurse is entitled to a week's holiday,

and as I have been exactly six months to-day at Martha's Vineyard, and

as a week is too short a time for a trip to the 'oilan,' [\* Island.]

and as a good lady whose acquaintance I have made here had given me a

pressing invitation to visit her---- See?

“Being the first day since I came up to London that I have been sole

mistress of my will and pleasure, I have been letting myself loose, like

Caesar does the moment his mad hoofies touch the grass. I must tell you

all about it. The day began beautifully. After a spell of laughing and

crying weather, and all the world sneezing and blowing its nose, there

came a frosty morning with the sun shining and the air as bright as

diamonds. I left the hospital between, eleven and twelve o'clock, and

crossing the park by Birdcage Walk I noticed that flags were flying on

Buckingham Palace and church bells ringing everywhere. It turned out

to be the birthday of the Prince of Wales, and the Lord Mayor's Day as

well, and by the time I got to Storey's Gate bands of music were playing

and people were scampering toward the Houses of Parliament. So I ran,

too, and from the gardens in front of Palace Yard I saw the Lord Mayor's

Show.

“Do you know what that is, good people? It is a civic pageant. Once a

year the City King makes a royal procession through the streets with his

soldiers and servants and keepers and pipers and retainers, bewigged and

bepowdered and bestockinged pretty much as they used to be in the days

before the flood. There have been seven hundred of him in succession,

and his particular vanity is to show that he is wearing the same clothes

still. But it was beautiful altogether, and I could have cried with

delight to see those grave-looking signiors forgetting themselves for

once and pretending they were big boys over again.

“Such a sight! Flags were flying everywhere and festoons were stretched

across the streets with mottoes and texts, such as 'Unity is strength'

and 'God save the Queen,' and other amiable if not original ideas.

Traffic was stopped in the main thoroughfares, and the 'buses were sent

by devious courses, much to the astonishment of the narrow streets.

Then the crowds, the dense layers of potted people with white, upturned

faces, for all the world like the pictures of the round stones standing

upright at the Giant's Causeway--it was wonderful!

“And then the fun! Until the procession arrived the policemen were

really obliging in that way. The one nearest me was as fat as Falstaff,

and a slim young Cockney in front kept addressing intimate remarks to

him and calling him Robert. The young impudence himself was just as

ridiculous, for he wore a fringe which was supported by hair-oil and

soap, and rolled carefully down the right side of his forehead so that

he could always keep his left eye on it. And he did, too.

“But the pageant itself! My gracious! how we laughed at it! There were

Epping Forest verderers, and beef-eaters from the Tower, and pipers of

the Scots Guards, and ladies of the ballet shivering on shaky stools and

pretending to be 'Freedom' and 'Commerce,' and last of all the City King

himself, smiling and bowing to all his subjects, and with his liegemen

behind him in yellow coats and red silk stockings. Perhaps the most

popular character was a Highlander in pink tights, where his legs ought

to have been, walking along as solemnly as if he thought it was a sort

of religious ceremony and he was an idol out for an airing.

“And then the bands! There must have been twenty of them, both brass and

fife, and they all played the Washington Post, but no two had the luck

to fall on the same bar at the same moment. It was a medley of all the

tunes in music, an absolute kaleidoscope of sounds, and meantime there

was the clash of bells from the neighbouring belfries in honour of the

Prince's birthday, and the rattle of musketry from the Guards, so that

when the double event was over I felt like the man whose wife presented

him with twins--I wouldn't have lost either of them for a million of

money, but I couldn't have found it in my heart to give a bawbee for

another one.

“The procession took half an hour to pass, and when it was gone,

remembering the ladies in lovely dresses who had rolled by in their

gorgeous carriages, looking not a bit cleverer or handsomer than other

people, I turned away with a little hard lump at my heart and a limp in

my left foot--the young Cockney with the fringe had backed on to my toe.

I suppose they are feasting with the lords and all the nobility at the

Guildhall to-night, and no doubt the crumbs that fall from the rich

man's table will go in pies and cakes to the alleys and courts where

hunger walks, and I dare say little Lazarus in the Mile End Road is

dreaming at this very moment of Dick Whittington and the Lord Mayor of

London.

“It must have been some waking dream of that sort which took possession

of me also, for what do you suppose I did? Shall I tell you? Yes, I

will. I said to myself: 'Glory, my child, suppose you were nearly as

poor as he was in this great, glorious, splendid London; suppose--only

suppose--you had no home and no friends, and had left the hospital, or

perhaps even been turned away from it, and hadn't a good lady's door

standing open to receive you, what would you do first, my dear?' To all

which I replied promptly, 'You would first get yourself lodgings, my

child, and then you would just go to work to show this great, glorious

London what a woman can do to bring it to her little feet.'

“I know grandfather is saying, 'Gough bless me, girl! you didn't try it,

though?' Well, yes, I did--just for fun, you know, and out of the spirit

of mischief that's born in every daughter of Eve. Do you remember that

Manx cat that wouldn't live in the house, notwithstanding all the bribes

and corruption of Aunt Rachel's new milk and softened bread, but went

off by the backyard wall to join the tribe of pariah pussies that snatch

a living how they may? Well, I felt like Rumpy for once, having three

'goolden sovereigns' in my pocket and a mind superior to fate.

“It was glorious fun altogether, and the world is so amusing that I

can't imagine why anybody should go out of it before he must. I hadn't

gone a dozen yards in my new character as Dick Whittington \_fille\_

before a coachman as fat as an elephant was shouting, 'Where d'ye think

yer going ter?' and I was nearly run down in the Broad Sanctuary by a

carriage containing two brazen women in sealskin jackets, with faces so

thick with powder and paint that you would have thought they had been

quarrelling on washing day and thrown the blue bag at each other's eyes.

I recognised one of them as a former nurse who had left the hospital in

disgrace, but happily she didn't see me, for the little hard lump at

my heart was turning as bitter as gall at that moment, so I made some

philosophical observations to myself and passed on.

“Oh, my gracious, these London landladies! They must be female Shylocks,

for the pound of flesh is the badge of all their tribe. The first one I

boarded asked two guineas for two rooms, and lights and fires extra.

'By the month?' says I. 'Yus, by the month if ye like,' says she. 'Two

guineas a month?' says I. Marry come up! I was out of that house in a

twinkling.

“Then I looked out a group of humbler thoroughfares, not far from the

Houses of Parliament, where nearly every house had a card fixed up on a

little green blind. At last I found a place that would do--for my week,

only my week, you know. Ten shillings and no extras. 'I'll take them,'

said I with a lofty air, and thereupon the landlady, a grim person, with

the suspicion of a mustache, began to cross-examine me. Was I married?

Oh, dear, no! Then what was my business? Fool that I was, I said I had

none, being full of my Dick Whittingtonism, and not choosing to remember

the hospital, for I was wearing my private clothes, you know. But hoot!

She didn't take unmarried young ladies without businesses, and I was out

in the street once more.

“I didn't mind it, not I indeed, and it was only for fun after all; but

since people objected to girls without businesses, I made up my mind to

be a singer if anybody asked me the question again. My third landlady

had only one room, and it was on the second floor back, but before I

got the length of mounting to this eyry I went through my examination

afresh. 'In the profession, miss?' 'What profession?' 'The styge, of

course.' 'Well, ye--yes, something of that sort.' 'Don't tyke anybody

that's on the styge.'

“Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I could have screamed, it was so ridiculous; but

time was getting on, Big Ben was striking four, and the day was closing

in. Then I saw the sign, 'Home for Girls.' 'Wonder if it is a charity?'

thinks I; but no, it didn't look like that, so in I went as bold as

brass, and inquired for the manageress. 'Is it the matron you mean,

miss?' 'Very well, the matron then,' said I, and presently she came

up--no, not smiling, for she wasn't an amiable-looking Christian, but

I thought she would smother me with mysterious questions. 'Tired of

the life, are you, my dear? It \_is\_ a cruel one, isn't it?' I stood

my ground for some minutes, and then, feeling dreadfully thick in the

throat, and cold down the back, I asked her what she was talking about,

whereupon she looked bewildered and inquired if I was a good girl, and

being told that I hoped so, she said she couldn't take me in there, and

then pointed to a card oh the wall which, simpleton that I was, I hadn't

read before: 'A home and rescue is offered to women who desire to leave

a life of misery and disgrace.'

“I \_did\_ scream that time, the world was so nonsensical. At one place,

being 'on the styge' I was not good enough to be taken in, at another I

was not bad enough, and what in the name of all that was ridiculous was

going to happen next? But it was quite dark by this time, the air was

as black as a northwest gale, and I was 'aweary for all my wings,'

so forgetting Dick Whittington \_fille\_, and only remembering the good

female Samaritan who had asked me to stay with her, I made a dart for

Victoria Street and jumped into the first 'bus that came along, just as

the hotels and the clubs and the great buildings were putting' out the

Prince of Wales's feathers as sign and symbol of the usual rejoicings

within.

“It was an 'Atlas' omnibus, and it took me to Piccadilly Circus, and

that being the wrong direction, I had to change. But a fog had come down

in the meanwhile, and lo, there I was in the middle of it!

“O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael! Do you know what a London fog is?

It's smoke, it's soot, it's sulphur. It is darker than night, for it

extinguishes the lights, and denser than the mist on the Curragh, and

filthier than the fumes of the brick-kiln. It makes you think the whole

round earth must be a piggery copper and that London has lifted the lid

off. In the midst of this inferno the cabs crawl and the 'buses creep,

and foul fiends, who turn out to be men merely, go flitting about with

torches, and you grope and croak and cough, and the most innocent faces

come puffing and snorting down on you like the beasts in the Apocalypse.

“I thought it good fun at first, but presently I could only keep from

crying by having a good laugh, and I was doing that, and asking somebody

the way to the Holborn omnibus, when a policeman pushed me and said:

'Come, move on; none of yer lyterin' abart here!'

“I could have choked, but remembering something I had seen on that very

spot on the night of my first day out, I dived across the street and ran

in spite of curses and collisions. But the 'somebody,' whoever he was,

had followed me, and he put me into the right 'bus, so I got here

at last. It took two mortal hours to do it, and after that spell of

purgatory this house is like a blessed paradise, peopled with angels of

mercy and grace, as paradise ought to be.

“The good Samaritan was very kind, and she made tea for me in a

twinkling and slaughtered the fatted calf in the shape of a pot of

raspberry jam. Her name is Mrs. Jupe, and her husband is something in a

club, and she has one child of eleven, whose bedfellow I am to be, and

here I am now with Miss Slyboots in our little bedroom feeling safe and

sound and monarch of all I survey.

“Good-night, good people! Half an hour hence I'll be going through a mad

march of the incidents of the day, turned topsy-turvy according to the

way of dreams. But wae's me! wae's me! If it had all been true--if I

had been really homeless and friendless and penniless, instead of having

three 'goolden' pounds in my purse, and Providence in the person of Mrs.

Jupe, to fall back upon! When I grow to be a wonderful woman and have

brought the eyes of all the earth upon me, I am going to be good to poor

girls who have no anchorage in London. John Storm was right: this

great, glorious, brilliant, delightful London can be very cruel to them

sometimes. It calls to them, beckons to them, smiles on them, makes them

think there must be joy in the blaze of so much light and luxury and

love by the side of so many palaces, and then----

“But perhaps the mischief lies deeper down; and though I'm not going to

cut my hair and wear a waistcoat and stand up for the equal rights of

the sexes, I feel at this moment that if I were only a man I should be

the happiest woman in the world, God bless me! Not that I am afraid of

London, not I indeed; and to show you how I long to take a header into

its turbulent tides, I hereby warn and apprize and notify you that

perhaps I may use my week's holiday to find a more congenial employment

than that of deputy White Owl at the hospital. I am not in my right

place yet, Aunt Anna, notwithstanding, so look out for revelations! 'To

be or not to be? that is the question.' Just say the word and I'll

leave it to Providence, which is always a convenient legatee, and in any

case--but wait, only wait and see what a week will bring forth!

“Greet the island for me to the inmost core of its being. The dear

little 'oilan!' Now that I am so far away, I go over it in my mind's

eye with the idiotic affection of a mother who knows every inch of her

baby's body and would like to gobble it. The leaves must be down by this

time, and there can be nothing on the bare boughs but the empty nests

where the little birdies used to woo and sing. My love to them and three

tremendous kisses for yourselves!

“Glory.

“P.S.--Oh, haven't I given you the 'newses' about John Storm? There are

so many things to think about in a place like London, you see. Yes, he

has gone into a monastery--communication cut off--wires broken down by

the 'storm,' etc. Soberly, he has gone for good seemingly, and to talk

of it lightly is like picking a penny out of a blind man's hat. Of

course, it was only to be expected that a man with an upper lip like

that should come to grief with all those married old maids and elderly

women of the opposite sex. Canons to right of him, canons to left of

him, canons in front of him--but rumour says it was John himself who

volleyed and thundered. He wrote me a letter when he was on the point

of going, saying how London had shocked and disappointed him, and how

he longed to escape from it and from himself at the same time, that he

might dedicate his life to God. It was right and true, no doubt; but

wherefore could not I pronounce Amen? He also mentioned something about

myself, how much I had been to him; for he had never known his mother,

and had never had a sister, and could never have a wife. All which was

excellent, but a mere woman like Glory doesn't want to read that sort of

thing in a letter, and would rather have five minutes of John Storm the

man than a whole eternity of John Storm the saint. His letter made me

think of Christian on his way to the eternal city; but that person

has always seemed to me a doubtful sort of hero anyway, taking Mrs.

Christian into account and the various little Christians, and I can't

pity him a pin about his bundle, for he might just as well have left

behind him what he couldn't enjoy of God's providence himself.

“But this is like hitting a cripple with his crutch, John being gone and

past all defending himself, and when I think of it in the streets I have

to run to keep myself from doing something silly, and then people think

I'm chasing an omnibus, when I'm really only chasing my tears. I can't

tell you much about the Brotherhood. It looks like a cross between a

palace and a penitentiary, and it appears that ritualism has gone one

better than High-Churchmanship, and is trying to introduce the monastic

system, which, to an ordinary woman of the world, seems well enough for

the man in the moon, though the man in the moon might have a different

way of looking at things. They say the brothers are all celibates and

live in cells, but I think I've seen a look in John Storm's eyes that

warns me that he wasn't intended for 'the lek o' that' exactly. To

tell you the truth, I half blame myself for what has happened, and I

am ashamed when I remember how jauntily I took matters all the time our

poor John was fighting with beasts at Ephesus. But I am vexed with him

too; and if only he had waited patiently before taking such a serious

step in order to hear \_my\_ arguments---- But no matter. A jackdaw isn't

to be called a religious bird because it keeps a-cawing on the steeple,

and John Storm won't make himself into a monk by shutting himself up in

a cell. Good-night.”

IV.

The house to which Glory had fled out of the fog was a little dingy

tobacconist's shop opening on a narrow alley that runs from Holborn into

Lincoln's-Inn Fields. It was kept by the baby farmer whom she had met at

the house of Polly Love, and the memory of the address thrust upon her

there had been her only resource on that day of crushing disappointment

and that night of peril. Mrs. Jupe's husband, a waiter at a West End

club, was a simple and helpless creature, very fond of his wife,

much deceived by her, and kept in ignorance of the darker side of her

business operations. Their daughter, familiarly called “Booboo,” a

silent child with cunning eyes and pasty cheeks, was being brought up to

help in the shop and to dodge the inspector of the school board.

On coming downstairs next morning to the close and dingy parlour at the

back, Glory had looked about her as one who had expected something she

did not see, whereupon Mrs. Jupe, who was at breakfast with her husband,

threw up her little twinkling eyes and said:

“Now I know what she's a-lookin' for; it's the byeby.”

“Where is it?” said Glory.

“Gorn, my dear.”

“Surely you don't mean----”

“No, not dead, but I 'ad to put it out, pore thing!”

“Ye see, miss,” said Mr. Jupe with his mouth full, “my missus couldn't

nurse the byeby and 'tend to the biziniss as well, so as reason was----”

“It brikes my 'eart to think it; but it made such a n'ise, pore

darling!”

“Does the mother know?” said Glory.

“That wasn't necessary, my dear. It's gorn to a pusson I can trust to

tyke keer of it, and I'm trooly thenkful----”

“It jest amarnts to this, miss: the biziness is too much for the missus

as things is----”

“I wouldn't keer if my 'ealth was what it used to be, in the dyes when I

'ad Booboo.”

“But it ain't, and she's often said as how she'd like a young laidy to

live with her and 'elp her with the shop.”

“A nice-lookin' girl might 'ave a-many chawnces in a place syme as this,

my dear.”

“Lawd, yus; and when I seen the young laidy come in at the door, 'Strike

me lucky!' thinks I, 'the very one!'”

“Syme 'ere, my dear. I reckkernized ye the minute I seen ye; and if ye

want to leave the hospital and myke a stawt, as you were saying--last

night----”

Glory stopped them. They were on the wrong trace entirely. She had

merely come to lodge with them, and if that was not agreeable----

“Well, and so ye shell, my dear; and if ye don't like the shop all at

onct, there's Booboo, she wants lessons----”

“But I can pay,” said Glory, and then she was compelled to say something

of her plans. She wanted to become a singer, perhaps an actress, and

to tell them the truth she might not be staying long, for when she got

engagements----

“Jest as you like, my dear; myke yerself at 'ome. On'y don't be in a

'urry about engygements. Good ones ain't tots picked up by the childring

in the streets these dyes.”

Nevertheless it was agreed that Glory was to lodge at the tobacconist's,

and Mr. Jupe was to bring her box from the hospital on coming home that

night from his work. She was to pay ten shillings a week, all told, so

that her money would last four or five weeks, and leave something to

spare. “But I shall be earning long before that,” she thought, and her

resources seemed boundless. She started on her enterprise instantly,

knowing no more of how to begin than that it would first be necessary to

find the office of an agent. Mr. Jupe remembered one such place.

“It's in a street off of Waterloo Road,” he said, “and the name on the

windows is Josephs.”

Glory found this person in a fur-lined coat and an opera hat, sitting in

a room which was papered with photographs, chiefly of the nude and the

semi-nude, intermingled with sheafs of playbills that hung from the

walls like ballads, from the board of the balladmonger.

“Vell, vot's yer line?” he asked.

Glory answered nervously and indefinitely.

“Vot can you do then?”

She could sing and recite and imitate people.

The man shrugged his shoulders. “My terms are two guineas down and ten

per cent on salary.”

Glory rose to go. “That is impossible. I can not----”

“Vait a minute. How much have you got?”

“Isn't that my business, sir?”

“Touchy, ain't ye, miss? But if you mean bizness, I'll tyke a guinea and

give you the first chawnce what comes in.”

Reluctantly, fearfully, distrustfully, Glory paid her guinea and left

her address.

“Daddle doo,” said the agent.

Then she found herself in the street.

“Two weeks less for lodgings,” she thought, as she returned to the

tobacconist's. But Mrs. Jupe seemed entirely satisfied.

“What did I tell ye, my dear? Good engygements ain't chasing nobody

abart the streets these dyes, and there's that many girls now as can do

a song and a dance and a recitashing----”

Three days passed, four days, five days, six days, a week, and still

no word from Mr. Josephs. Glory called on him again. He counselled

patience. It was the dead season at the theatres and music halls, but if

she only waited----

She waited a week longer and then called again, and again, and yet

again. But she brought nothing back except her mimicry of the man's

manner. She could hit him off to a hair--his raucous voice, his guttural

utterance, and the shrug of his shoulders that told of the Ghetto.

Mrs. Jupe shrieked with laughter. That lady's spirits were going up as

Glory's came down. At the end of the third week she said, “I can't abear

to tyke yer money no longer, my dear, you not doing nothink.”

Then she hinted at a new arrangement. She had to be much from home.

It was necessary; her health was poor--an obvious fiction. During her

absence she had to leave Booboo in charge.

“It ain't good for the child, my dear, and it ain't good for the shop;

but if anybody syme as yerself would tyke a turn behind the counter----”

Having less than ten shillings in her pocket, Glory was forced to

submit.

There was a considerable traffic through the little turnstile. Lying

between Bedford Row and Lincoln's Inn, it was the usual course of

lawyers and lawyers' clerks passing to and fro from the courts. They

were not long in seeing that a fresh and beautiful face was behind the

counter of the dingy little tobacco-shop. Business increased, and Mrs.

Jupe became radiant.

“What did I tell ye, my dear? There's more real gentlemen a-mooching

rahnd here in a day than a girl would have a chawnce of meeting in a

awspital in a twelvemonth.”

Glory's very soul was sickening. The attentions of the men, their

easy manners, their little liberties, their bows, their smiles, their

compliments--it was gall and wormwood to the girl's unbroken spirit.

Nevertheless she was conscious of a certain pleasure in the bitterness.

The bitterness was her own, the pleasure some one else's, so to speak,

who was looking on and laughing. She felt an unconquerable impulse to

sharpen her wit on Mrs. Jupe's customers, and even to imitate them to

their faces. They liked it, so she was good for business both ways.

But she remembered John Storm and felt suffocated with shame. Her

thoughts turned to him constantly, and she called at the hospital to ask

if there were any letters. There were two, but neither of them was from

Bishopsgate Street. One was from Aunt Anna. Glory was not to dream of

leaving the hospital. With tithes going down every year, and everything

else going up, how could she think of throwing away a salary and adding

to their anxieties? The other was from her grandfather:

“Glad to hear you have had a holiday, dear Glory, and trust you are

feeling the better for the change. Must confess to being a little

startled by the account of your adventure on Lord Mayor's Day, with the

wild scheme for cutting adrift from the hospital and taking London by

storm. But it was just like my little witch, my wandering gipsy, and

I knew it was all nonsense; so when Aunt Anna began to scold I took my

pipe and went upstairs. Sorry to hear that John Storm has gone over to

Popery, for that is what it comes to, though he is not under the Romish

obedience. I am the more concerned because I failed to make his peace

with his father. The old man seems to blame me for everything, and has

even taken to passing me on the road. Give my best respects to Mrs.

Jupe, when you see her again, with my thanks for taking care of you. And

now that you are alone in that great and wicked Babylon, take good care

of yourself, my dear one. To know that my runaway is well and happy and

prosperous is all I have left to reconcile me to her absence. Yes,

the harvest is over and threshed and housed, and we have fires in the

parlour nearly every day, which makes Anna severe sometimes, coals being

so dear just now, and the turf no longer allowed to us.”

It was ten days overdue. That night, in her little bedroom, with its low

ceiling and sloping floor, Glory wrote her answer:

“But it isn't nonsense, my dear grandfather, and I really have left the

hospital. I don't know if it was the holiday and the liberty or what,

but I felt like that young hawk at Glenfaba--do you remember it?--the

one that was partly snared and came dragging the trap on to the lawn by

a string caught round its leg. I had to cut it away, I had to, I had

to! But you mustn't feel one single moment's uneasiness about me. An

able-bodied woman like Glory Quayle doesn't starve in a place like

London. Besides, I am provided for already, so you see my bow abides in

strength. The first morning after my arrival Mrs. Jupe told me that if I

cared to take to myself the style and title of teacheress to her little

Slyboots I had only to say the word and I should be as welcome as

the flowers in May. It isn't exactly first fiddling, you know, and it

doesn't bring an ambassador's salary, but it may serve for the present,

and give me time to look about. You mustn't pay too much attention to my

lamentations about being compelled by Nature to wear a petticoat. Things

being so arranged in this world I'll make them do. But it does make

one's head swim and one's wings droop to see how hard Nature is on a

woman compared to a man. Unless she is a genius or a jelly-fish there

seems to be only one career open to her, and that is a lottery, with

marriage for the prizes, and for the blanks--oh dear, oh dear! Not that

I have anything to complain of, and I hate to be so sensitive. Life is

wonderfully interesting, and the world is such an amusing place that

I've no patience with people who run away from it, and if I were a

man--but wait, only wait, good people!”

V.

John Storm had made one other friend at Bishopsgate Street--the dog of

the monastery. It was a half-bred bloodhound, and nobody seemed to know

whence he came and why he was there. He was a huge, ungainly, and most

forbidding creature, and partly for that reason, but chiefly because it

was against rule to fix the affections on earthly things, the brothers

rarely caressed him. Unnoticed and unheeded, he slept in the house by

day and prowled through the court by night, and had hardly ever been

known to go out into the streets. He was the strictest monk in the

monastery, for he eyed every stranger as if he had been Satan himself,

and howled at all music except the singing in the church.

On seeing John for the first time, he broadened his big flews and

stiffened his thick stern, according to his wont with all intruders,

but in this instance the intruder was not afraid. John patted him on the

peaked head and rubbed him on the broad nose, then opened his mouth and

examined his teeth, and finally turned him on his back and tickled his

chest, and they were fast friends and comrades forever after.

Some weeks after the dedication they were in the courtyard together, and

the dog was pitching and plunging and uttering deep bays which echoed

between the walls like thunder at play. It was the hour of morning

recreation, between Terce and Sext, and the religious were lolling about

and talking, and one lay brother was sweeping up the leaves that had

fallen from the tree, for the winter had come and the branches were

bare. The lay brother was Brother Paul, and he made sidelong looks at

John, but kept his head down and went on with his work without speaking.

One by one the brothers went back to the house, and John made ready

to follow them, but Paul put himself in his way. He was thinner

than before, and his eyes were red and his respiration difficult.

Nevertheless, he smiled in a childlike way, and began to talk of the

dog. What life there was in the old creature still! and nobody had

known, there was so much play in it.

“You are not feeling so well, are you?” said John.

“Not quite so well,” he answered.

“The day is cold, and this penance is too much for you.”

“No, it's not that. I asked for it, you know, and I like it. It's

something else. To tell you the truth, I'm very foolish in some ways.

When I've got anything on my mind I'm always thinking. Day and night

it's the same with me, and even work----”

His breathing was audible, but he tried to laugh.

“Do you know what it is this time? It's what you said on the roof on the

night of the vows, you remember. What you didn't say, I mean--and

that's just the trouble. It was wrong to talk of the world without

great necessity, but if you had been able to say 'Yes' when I asked if

everybody was well you would have done it, wouldn't you?”

“We'll not talk of that now,” said John.

“No, it would be the same fault as before. Still----”

“How keen the air is! And your asthma is so troublesome! You must really

let me speak to the Father.”

“Oh, that's nothing. I'm used to it. But if you know yourself what it is

to be always thinking of anybody----”

John called to the dog, and it capered about him. “Good-morning, Brother

Paul.” And he went into the house. The lay brother leaned on his besom

and drew a long sigh that seemed to come from the depths of his chest.

John had hastened away, lest his voice should betray him.

“Awful!” he thought. “It must be awful to be always thinking of

somebody, and in fear of what has happened to her. Poor little Polly!

She's not worthy of it, but what does that matter? Blood is blood and

love is love, and only God is stronger.”

A few days afterward the air darkened and softened, and snow began to

fall. Between Vespers and Evensong John went up to the tower to see

London under its mantle of white. It was like an Eastern city now under

an Eastern moonlight, and he was listening to the shouts and laughter of

people snowballing in the streets when he heard a laboured step on the

stair behind him. It was Brother Paul coming up with a spade to shovel

away the snow. His features were pinched and contracted, and his young

face was looking old and worn.

“You really must not do it,” said John. “To work like this is not

penance, but suicide. I'll speak to the Father, and he'll----”

“Don't; for mercy's sake, don't! Have some pity, at all events! If you

only knew what a good thing work is for me--how it drives away thoughts,

and stifles----”

“But it's so useless, Brother Paul. Look! The snow is still falling, and

there's more to come yet.”

“All the same, it's good for me. When I'm very tired I can sleep

sometimes. And then God is good to you if you don't spare yourself. Some

day perhaps he'll tell me something.”

“He'll tell us everything in his own good time, Brother Paul.”

“It's easy to counsel patience. If I were like you I should be counting

the days until my time was over, and that would help me to bear things.

But when you are dedicated for life----”

He stopped at his work and looked over the parapet, and seemed to be

gazing into the weary days to come.

“Have you anybody of your own out there?”

“You mean any----”

“Any relative--any sister?”

“No.”

“Then you don't know what it is; that's why you won't give me an

answer.”

“Don't ask me, Brother Paul.”

“Why not?”

“It might only make you the more uneasy if I told you what----”

The lay brother let his spade fall, then slowly, very slowly, picked it

up again and said:

“I understand. You needn't say any more. I shall never ask you again.”

The bell rang for Evensong, and John hurried away. “If it were only some

one who was deserving of it!” he thought--“some one who was worthy that

a man should risk his soul to save her!”

At supper and in church he saw Brother Paul going about like a man in a

waking dream, and when he went up to bed he heard him moving restlessly

in the adjoining cell. The fear of betraying himself was becoming

unbearable, and he leaped up and stepped out into the corridor,

intending to ask the Superior to give him another room elsewhere. But

he stopped and came back. “It's not brave,” he thought, “it's not kind,

it's not human,” and, saying this again and again, as one whistles when

going by a haunted house, he covered his ears and fell asleep.

In the middle of the night, while it was still quite dark, he was

awakened by a light on his face and the sense of some one looking down

on him in his sleep. With a shudder he opened his eyes and saw Brother

Paul, candle in hand, standing by the bed. His eyes were red and

swollen, and when he spoke his voice was full of tears.

“I know it's a fault to come into anybody else's cell,” he said, “but

I would rather do my penance than endure this torture. Something has

happened--I can see that quite well; but I don't know what it is, and

the suspense is killing me. The certainty would be easier to bear; and

I swear to you by Him who died for us that if you tell me I shall be

satisfied! Is she dead?”

“Not that,” said John by a sudden impulse, and then there was an awful

silence.

“Not dead!” said Paul. “Then would to God that she were dead, for it

must be something worse, a thousand times worse!”

John felt as if the secret had been stolen from him in his sleep; but

it was gone, and he could say nothing. Brother Paul's lips trembled, his

respiration quickened, and he turned away and smote his head against the

wall and sobbed.

“I knew it all the time,” he said. “Her sister went the same way, and I

could see that she was going too, and that was why I was so anxious. Oh,

my poor mother! my poor mother!”

For two days after that John saw no more of Brother Paul. “He is doing

his penance somewhere,” he thought.

Meanwhile the snow was still falling, and when the brothers went out to

Lauds at 6 A.M. they passed through a cutting of snow which was banked

up afresh every morning, though the day had not then dawned. On the

third day John was the first to go down to the hall, and there he met

Brother Paul, with his spade in his hands, coming out of the courtyard.

He looked like a man who was melting before a fire as surely as a piece

of wax.

“I am sorry now that I told you,” said John.

Brother Paul hung his head.

“It is easy to see that you are suffering more than ever; and it is all

my fault. I will go to the Father and confess.”

Between breakfast and Terce John carried out this intention. The

Superior was sitting before a handful of fire, in a little room that

was darkened by leather-bound books and by the flakes of snow which were

falling across the window panes.

“Father,” said John, “I am a cause of offence to another brother, and

it is I who should be doing his penance.” And then he told how he had

broken the observance which forbids any one to talk of his relations

with the world without

The Father listened with great solemnity.

“My son,” he said, “your temptation is a testimony to the reality of the

religious life. Satan's rage against the home of consecrated souls is

terrible, and he would fain break in upon it if he could with worldly

thoughts and cares and passions. But we must conquer him by his own

weapons. Your penance, my son, shall be of the same kind with your

offence. Go to the door and take the place of the doorkeeper, and stay

there day and night until the end of the year. Thus shall the evil one

be made aware that you are the guardian of our house, to be tampered

with no more.”

Brother Andrew was troubled when John took his place at the door that

night, but John himself was unconcerned. He was doorkeeper to the

household, so he began on the duties of his menial position. As the

brothers passed in and out on their mission-errands he opened the door

and closed it. If any one knocked he answered, “Praise be to God!” then

slid back the little grating in the middle panel of the door and looked

out at the stranger. The hall was a chill place, with a stone floor, and

he sat on a form that stood against one of its walls. His bed was in an

alcove which had formerly been the cloak-room, and a card hung over it

with the inscription, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord.” He had

no company except big Brother Andrew, who stole down sometimes to cheer

him with his speechless presence, and the dog, which was always hanging

about.

VI.

It was at least some comfort to be out of the proximity of Brother Paul.

The sounds of the lay brother in the neighbouring cell had brought back

recollections of Glory, and he had more than he could do to conquer his

thoughts of her. Since he had taken his vows and had ceased to mention

her in his prayers she had been always with him, and his fears for her

fate had been pricked and goaded by the constant presence of Brother

Paul's anxieties.

On the other hand, it was some loss that he could not go to the church,

and he remembered with a pang how happy he had been after a night of

terrors when he had gone into God's house in the morning and cast his

burden on him with one yearning cry of “God bless all women and young

children!”

It was now the Christmas season, and his heart tingled and thrilled as

the brothers passed through the door at midday and talked of the women

who attended the Christmas services. Were they really so calm as they

seemed to be, and had they conquered their natural affections?

Sometimes during the midday service he would slide back the grating and

listen for the women's voices. He heard one voice in all of them, but he

knew it was only a dream. Then he would watch the snow falling from the

little patch of dun-coloured sky crossed by bars, and tell himself that

that was all he was to see of the world henceforth.

The sky emptied itself at last, and Brother Paul came again to shovel

away the snow. He was weaker than ever, for the wax was melting

away. When he began to work, his chest was oppressed and his face was

feverish. John snatched the spade out of his hand and fell to doing his

work instead of him.

“I can't bear to see it, and I won't!” he said.

“But the Father----?”

“I don't care--you can tell him if you like. You are killing yourself by

inches, and you are a failing man any way.”

“Am I really dying?” said Brother Paul, and he staggered away like one

who had heard his sentence.

John looked after, him and thought: “Now what should I do if I were in

that man's place? If the case were Glory's, and I fixed here as in a

vice?”

He was ashamed when he thought of Glory like that, and he dismissed the

idea, but it came back with mechanical obstinacy and he was compelled to

consider it. His vows? Yes, it would be death to his soul to break them.

But if she were lost who had no one but him to look to--if she went down

to wreck and ruin, then the fires of hell would be as nothing to his

despair!

Brother Paul came to him next day and sat on the form by his side and

said:

“If I'm really dying, what am I to do?”

“What would you like to do, Brother Paul?”

“I should like to go out and find her.”

“What good would there be in that?”

“I could say something that would stop her and put an end to

everything.”

“Are you sure of it?”

A wild light came into his eyes and he answered, “Quite sure.”

John played the hypocrite and began to counsel patience.

“But a man can't live without hope and not go mad,” said Brother Paul.

“We must trust and pray,” said John.

“But God never answers us. If it were your own case what would you do?

If some one outside were lost----”

“I should go to the Father and say, 'Let me go in search of her.'”

“I'll do it,” said Brother Paul.

“Why not? The Father is kind and tender and he loves his children.”

“Yes, I \_will\_ do it,” said Paul, and he made for the Father's room.

He got to the door of the cell and then came back again. “I can't,” he

said. “There's something you don't know. I can't look in his face and

ask.”

“Stay here and I'll ask for you,” said John.

“God bless you!” said Paul.

John made three hasty strides and then stopped.

“But if he will not----”

“Then--God's will be done!”

It was morning, and the Superior was reading in his room.

“Come in, my son,” he said, and he laid his book on his lap. “This is

a book you must read some day--the Inner Life of Père Lacordaire. Most

fascinating! An inner life of intolerable horror until he had conquered

his natural affections.”

“Father,” said John, “one of our lay brothers has a little sister in the

world and she has fallen into trouble. She has gone from the place where

he left her, and God only knows where she is now! Let him go out and

find her.”

“Who is it, my son?”

“Brother Paul--and she is all he has, and he can not help but think of

her.”

“This is a temptation of the evil one, my son. Brother Paul has newly

taken the vows and so have you. The vows are a challenge to the powers

of evil, and it is only to be expected that he who takes them will be

tested to the uttermost.”

“But, Father, she is young and thoughtless. Let him go out and find her

and save her, and he will come back and praise God a thousand times the

more.”

“The temptations of Satan are very subtle; they come in the guise of

duty. Satan is tempting our brother through love, and you, also, through

pity. Let us turn our backs on him.”

“Then it is impossible?”

“Quite impossible.”

When John returned to the door Brother Paul was standing by the alcove

gazing with wet eyes on the text hanging above the bed. He saw his

answer in John's face, and they sat down on the form without speaking.

The bell rang for service and the religious began to pass through

the hall. As the Father was crossing the threshold Brother Paul flung

himself down at his feet and clutched his cassock and made a frantic

appeal for pity.

“Father, have pity upon me and let me go!”

The Father's eyes became moist but his will remained unshaken. “As a

man I ought to have pity,” he said, “and as the Father of all of you

I should be kind to my children; but it is not I who refuse you, it is

God, and I should be guilty of a sin if I let you go.”

Then Paul burst into mad laughter and the religious gathered round and

looked at him in astonishment. There was foam on his lips and fire in

his eyes, and he threw up his hands and fell back fainting.

The Father made the sign of the cross on his breast and his lips moved

in silence for a moment. Then he said to John, who had raised the lay

brother in his arms:

“Leave him there. Damp his forehead and hold his hands.”

And turning to the religious he added: “I ask the prayers of the

community for our poor brother. Satan is fighting for his soul. Let us

wrestle in prayer that we may expel the spirit that possesses him.”

At the next moment John was alone with the unconscious man, except for

the dog which was licking his forehead. And looking after the Superior,

he told himself that such unlimited power over the body and soul of

another the Almighty could have meant for no man. The love of God and

the fear of the devil had swallowed up the love of man and stifled all

human affections. Such religion must have hardened the best man ever

born. As for the poor broken creature lying there so still, his vows

had been made to heaven, and to heaven alone his obedience was due. The

nature within him had spoken too loudly, but there were laws of Nature

which it was a sin to resist. Then why should he resist them? The cry of

blood was the voice of God, or God had no voice and He could speak to no

man. Then, why should he not listen?

Brother Paul recovered consciousness and raised his head. The waves of

memory flowed back upon him and his eyes flamed and his lips trembled.

“I will go if I have to break my vows!” he said.

“No need for that,” said John.

“Why so?”

“Because I will let you out at night and let you in again in the

morning.”

“You?”

“Yes, I. Listen!”

And then these two crushed and fettered souls, bound by no iron

bonds, confined by no bolts and bars, but only under the shadow of

the supernatural, sat together like prisoners in a dungeon concocting

schemes for their escape.

“The Father locks the outer gate himself,” said John. “Where does he

keep the key?”

“In his own room on a nail above his bed,” said Paul.

“Who is the lay brother attending to him now?”

“Brother Andrew.”

“Brother Andrew will do anything for me,” said John.

“But the dog?” said Paul. “He is always in the court at night, and he

barks at the sound of a step.”

“Not my step,” said John.

“I'll do it,” said Paul.

“I will send you to some one who can find your sister. You'll tell her

you come from me and she'll take you with her.”

They could hear the singing in the church, and they paused to listen.

“When I come back in the morning I'll confess everything and do my

penance,” said Paul.

“And I too,” said John.

The sun had come out with a sudden gleam and the thawing snow was

dripping from the trees in drops like diamonds. The singing ceased, the

service ended, and the brothers came back to the house. When the Father

entered, Paul was clothed and in his right mind and sitting quietly on

the form.

“Thank God for this answer to our prayers!” said the Father. “But you

must pray without ceasing lest Satan should conquer you again. Until

the end of the year say your Rosary in the church every night alone from

Compline to midnight.”

Then turning to John he said with a smile: “And you shall be like the

anchoret of old to this household, my son. We monks pray by day, but

the anchoret prays by night. Unless we know that in the dark hours the

anchoret guards the house, who shall rest on his bed in peace?”

VII.

At the end of the fourth week, after Glory had paid her fee to the

agent, she called on him again. It was Saturday morning, and the

vicinity of his office was a strange and surprising scene. The staircase

and passages to the house, as well as the pavement of the streets far as

to the public-house at the corner, were thronged with a gaudy but shabby

army of music-hall artistes of both sexes. When Glory attempted to pass

through them she was stopped by a cry of, “Tyke yer turn on Treasury

day, my dear,” and she fell back and waited.

One by one they passed upstairs, came down again with cheerful faces,

shouted their adieus and disappeared. Meanwhile they amused themselves

with salutations, all more or less lively and familiar, told stories and

exchanged confidences, while they danced a step or stamped about to keep

away the cold. “You've chucked the slap [\* Rouge.] on with a mop this

morning, my dear,” said one of the girls. “Have I, my love? Well, I was

a bit thick about the clear, so I thought it would keep me warm.” “It

ain't no use facing the doner of the casa with that,” said a man who

jingled a few coins as he came downstairs, and away went two to the

public-house. Sometimes a showy brougham would drive up to the door and

a magnificent person in a fur-lined coat, with diamond rings on both

hands, would sweep through the lines and go upstairs. When he came down

again his carriage door would be opened by half a dozen “pros” who would

call him “dear old cully” and tell him they were “down on their luck”

and “hadn't done a turn for a fortnight.” He would distribute shillings

and half-crowns among them, cry “Ta-ta, boys,” and drive away, whereupon

his pensioners would stroke their cuffs and collars of threadbare

astrakhan, tip winks after the carriage, and say, “That's better than

crying cabbages in Covent Garden, ain't it?” Then they would all laugh

knowingly, and one would say, “What's it to be, cully?” and somebody

would answer, “Come along to Poverty Point then,” and a batch of the

waiting troop would trip off to the corner.

One of the gorgeous kind was coming down the stairs when his eye fell on

Glory as she stood in a group of girls who were decked out in rose pink

and corresponding finery. He paused, turned back, reopened the office

door, and said in an audible whisper, “Who's the pretty young ginger

you've got here, Josephs?” A moment afterward the agent had come out and

called her upstairs.

“It's salary day, my dear--vait there,” he said, and he put her into an

inner room, which was tawdrily furnished in faded red plush, with piano

and coloured prints of ballet girls and boxing men, and was full of the

odour of stale tobacco and bad whisky.

She waited half an hour, feeling hot and ashamed and troubled with

perplexing thoughts, and listening to the jingle of money in the

adjoining room, mingled with the ripple of laughter and sometimes the

exchange of angry words. At length the agent came back, saying, “Vell,

vat can I do for you to-day, my dear?”

He had been drinking, his tone was familiar, and he placed himself on

the end of the sofa upon which Glory was seated.

Glory rose immediately. “I came to ask if you have heard of anything for

me,” she said.

“Sit down, my dear.”

“No, thank you.”

“Heard anything? Not yet, my dear. You must vait----”

“I think I've waited long enough, and if your promises amount to

anything you'll get me an appearance at all events.”

“So I vould, my dear. I vould get you an extra turn at the Vashington,

but it's very expensive, and you've got no money.”

“Then why did you take what I had if you can do nothing? Besides, I

don't want anything but what my talents can earn. Give me a letter to a

manager--for mercy's sake, do something for me!”

There was a shrug of the Ghetto as the man rose and said, “Very vell, if

it's like that, I'll give you a letter and velcome.”

He sat at a table and wrote a short note, sealed it carefully in an

envelope which was backed with advertisements, then gave it to Glory,

and said, “Daddle doo. You'll not require to come again.”

Going downstairs she looked at the letter. It was addressed to an acting

manager at a theatre in the farthest west of London. The passages of

the house and the pavements outside were now empty; it was nearly two

o'clock, and snow was beginning to fall. She was feeling cold and a

little hungry, but, making up her mind to deliver the letter at once,

she hastened to the Temple station.

There was a \_matinée\_, so the acting manager was “in front.” He took

the letter abruptly, opened it with an air of irritation, glanced at

it, glanced at Glory, looked at the letter again, and then said in a

strangely gentle voice, “Do you know what's in this, my girl?”

“No,” said Glory.

“Of course you don't--look,” and he gave her the letter to read. It ran:

“Dear ----: This wretched young ginger is worrying me for a shop. She

isn't worth a ----. Get rid of her, and oblige Josephs.”

Glory flushed up to the forehead and bit her lip; then a little nervous

laugh broke from her throat, and two great tears came rolling from her

eyes. The acting manager took the letter out of her hands and tapped her

kindly on the shoulder.

“Never mind, my child. Perhaps we'll disappoint him yet. Tell me all

about it.”

She told him everything, for he had bowels of compassion. “We can't put

you on at present,” he said, “but our saloon contractor wants a young

lady to give out programmes, and if that will do to begin with----”

It was a crushing disappointment, but she was helpless. The employment

was menial, but it would take her out of the tobacco shop and put her

into the atmosphere of the theatre, and bring fifteen shillings a week

as well. She might begin on Monday if she could find her black dress,

white apron, cap, and cuffs. The dress she had already, but the apron,

cap, and cuffs would take the larger part of the money she had left.

By Sunday night she had swallowed her pride with one great gulp and was

writing home to Aunt Anna:

“I'm as busy as Trap's wife these days; indeed, that goddess of industry

is nothing to me now; but Christmas is coming, and I shall want to buy a

present for grandfather (and perhaps for the aunties as well), so please

send me a line in secret saying what he is wanting most. Snow! snow!

snow! The snow it snoweth every day.”

On the Monday night she presented herself at the theatre and was handed

over to another girl to be instructed in her duties. The house was one

of the best in London, and Glory found pleasure in seeing the audience

assemble. For the first half hour the gorgeous gowns, the beautiful

faces, and the distinguished manners excited her and made her forget

herself. Then little by little there came the pain of it all, and by

the time the curtain had gone up her gorge was rising, and she crept out

into the quiet corridor where her colleague was seated already under an

electric lamp reading a penny number.

The girl was a little, tender black and white thing, looking like a

dahlia. In a quarter of an hour Glory knew all about her. During the

day she served in a shop in the Whitechapel Road. Her name was Agatha

Jones--they called her Aggie. Her people lived in Bethnal Green, but

Charlie always came to the theatre to take her home. Charlie was her

young man.

In the intervals between the acts Glory assisted in the cloak-room, and

there the great ladies began to be very amusing. After the tinkle of

the electric bell announcing the second act she returned to the deserted

corridor, and before her audience of one gave ridiculous imitations in

dead silence of ladies using the puff and twiddling up their front hair.

“My! It's you as oughter be on the styge, my dear,” said Aggie.

“Do you think so?” said Glory.

“I'm going on myself soon. Charlie's getting me on the clubs.”

“The clubs?”

“The foreign clubs in Soho. More nor one has begun there.”

“Really?”

“The foreigners like dancing best. If you can do the splits and shoulder

the leg it's the mykings of you for life.”

When the performance was over they found Charlie waiting on the square

in front of the house. Glory had seen him before, and she recognised

him immediately. He was the young Cockney with the rolled fringe who had

bantered the policeman by Palace Yard on Lord Mayor's Day. They got into

the Underground together, and when Glory returned to the subject of the

foreign clubs Charlie grew animated and eloquent.

“They give ye five shillings a turn, and if yer good for anythink ye

may do six turns of a Sunday night, not ter speak of special nights, and

friendly leads and sech.”

When Glory got out at the Temple Aggie's head was resting on Charlie's

shoulder, and her little gloved fingers were lightly clasped in his

hand.

On the second night Glory had conquered a good deal of her pride. The

grace of her humour was saving her. It was almost as if somebody else

was doing servant's duty and she was looking on and laughing. After all

it was very funny that she should be there, and what delicious thoughts

it would bring later! Even Nell Gwynne sold oranges in the pit at first,

and then some day when she had risen above all this----

It must have been a great night of some sort. She had noticed red baize

and an awning outside, and the front of one of the boxes was laden with

flowers. When its occupants entered, the orchestra played the national

anthem and the audience rose to their feet. It was the Prince with the

Princess and their daughters. The audience was only less distinguished,

and something far off and elusive moved in her memory when a lady handed

her a check and said in a sweet voice:

“A gentleman will come for this seat.”

Glory's station was in the stalls, and she did not go out when the

lights went down and the curtain rose. The play was a modern one--the

story of a country girl who returned home after a life of bitterness and

shame.

It moved her and thrilled her, and stirred the smouldering fires of her

ambition. She was sorry for the actress who played the part--the poor

thing did not understand--and she would have given worlds to pour her

own voice through the girl's mouth. Then she was conscious that she

was making a noise with her hands, and looking down at them she saw the

crumpled programmes and her white cuffs, and remembered where she was,

and what, and she murmured, “O God, do not punish me for these vain

thoughts!”

All at once a light shot across her face as she stood in the darkness.

The door of the corridor had been opened, and a gentleman was coming in.

He stood a moment beside her with his eyes on the stage and said in a

whisper:

“Did a lady leave a seat?”

It was Drake! She felt as if she would suffocate, but answered in a

strained voice:

“Yes, that one. Programme, please.”

He took the programme without looking at her, put his fingers into his

waistcoat pocket, and slid something into her hand. It was sixpence.

She could have screamed. The humiliation was too abject. Hurrying out,

she threw down her papers, put on her cloak and hat and fled.

But next morning she laughed at herself, and when she took out Drake's

sixpence she laughed again. With the poker and a nail she drove a hole

through the coin and then hung it up by a string to a hook over the

mantelpiece, and laughed (and cried a little) every time she looked at

it. Life was so funny! Why did people bury themselves before they were

dead? She wouldn't do it for worlds! But she did not go back to the

theatre for all that, and neither did she return to the counter.

Christmas was near, the shops became bright and gay, and she remembered

what beautiful presents she had meant to send home out of the money

she had hoped to earn. On Christmas Eve the streets were thronged with

little family groups out shopping, and there were many amusing sights.

Then she laughed a good deal; she could not keep from laughing.

Christmas Day opened with a rimy, hazy morning, and the business

thoroughfares were deserted. They had sucking pig for dinner, and Mr.

Jupe, who was at home for the holiday, behaved like a great boy. It was

afternoon before the postman arrived with a bag as big as a creel, and

full of Christmas cards and parcels. There was a letter for Glory. It

was from Aunt Anna.

“We are concerned about the serious step you have taken, but trust it is

for the best, and that you will give Mrs. Jupe every satisfaction. Don't

waste your savings on us. Remember there are post-office savings banks

everywhere, and that there is no friend like a little money.”

At the bottom there was a footnote from Aunt Rachel: “Do you ever see

the Queen in London, and the dear Prince and Princess?”

She went to service that night at St. Paul's Cathedral. Entering by the

west door, a verger in a black cloak directed her to a seat in the

nave. The great place was dark and chill and half empty. All the singing

seemed to come from some unseen region far away, and when the preacher

got into the curious pulpit he looked like a Jack-in-the-box, and it

seemed to be a drum that was speaking.

Coming out before the end, she thought she would walk to the Whitechapel

Road, of which Aggie had told her something. She did so, going by

Bishopsgate Street, but turning her head away as she passed the church

of the Brotherhood. The motley crowd of Polish Jews, Germans, and

Chinamen, in the most interesting street in Europe, amused her for a

while, and then she walked up Houndsditch and passed through Bishopsgate

Street again.

At the Bank she took an omnibus for home. The only other fare was a

bouncing girl in a big hat with feathers.

“Going to the market, my dear? No? I hates it myself, too, so I goes to

the 'alls instead. Come from the country, don't ye? Same here. Father's

a farmer, but he's got sixteen besides me, so I won't be missed. Live?

I live at Mother Nan's dress-house now. Nice gloves, ain't they? My hat?

Glad you like the style. I generally get a new hat once a week, and as

for gloves, if anybody likes me----”

That night in her musty bedroom Glory wrote home while little Slyboots

slept: “'The best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft aglee.' Witness

me!

“I intended to send you some Christmas presents, but the snow has

been so industrious that not a mouse has stirred if he could help it.

However, I send three big kisses instead, and a pair of mittens for

grandfather--worked with my own hands, because I wouldn't allow any

good Brownie to do it for me. Tell Aunt Rachel I \_do\_ see the Prince and

Princess sometimes. I saw them at the theatre the other night. Yes, the

theatre! You must not be shocked--we are rather gay in London--we go

to the theatre occasionally. It is so interesting to meet all the great

people! You see I am fairly launched in fashionable society, but I love

everybody just the same as ever, and the moment the candle is out I

shall be thinking of Glenfaba and seeing the 'Waits,' and 'Oiel Verree,'

and 'Hunting the Wren,' and grandfather smoking his pipe in the study

by the light of the fire, and Sir Thomas Traddles, the tailless, purring

and blinking at his feet. Merry Christmas to you, my dears! By-bye.”

VIII.

“'Where's that bright young Irish laidy?' the gentlemen's allwiz sayin',

my dear,” said Mrs. Jupe, and for very shame's sake, having no money to

pay for board and lodgings, Glory returned to the counter.

A little beyond Bedford Row, in a rookery of apartment houses in narrow

streets, there lives a colony of ballet girls and chorus girls who are

employed at the lighter theatres of the Strand. They are a noisy, merry,

reckless, harmless race, free of speech, fond of laughter, wearing false

jewellery, false hair, and false complexions, but good boots always,

which they do their utmost not to conceal.

Many of these girls pass through the Turnstile on their way to their

work, and toward seven in the evening the tobacconist's would be full of

them. Nearly all smoked, as the stained forefinger of their right

hands showed, and while they bought their cigarettes they chirruped and

chirped until the little shop was like a tree full of linnets in the

spring.

Most of them belonged to the Frailty Theatre, and their usual talk

was of the “stars” engaged there. Chief among these were the “Sisters

Bellman,” a trio of singers in burlesque, and a frequent subject of

innuendo and rapartee was one Betty, of that ilk, whose name Glory could

remember to have seen blazing in gold on nearly every hoarding and sign.

“Says she was a governess in the country, my dear.” “Oh, yus, I dare

say. Came out of a slop shop in the Mile End Road though, and learned

'er steps with the organ man in the court a-back of the jam factory.”

“Well, I never! She's a wide un, she is!” “About as wide as Broad

Street, my dear. Use ter sell flowers in Piccadilly Circus till somebody

spoke to 'er, and now she rides 'er brougham, doncher know.” Then the

laughter would be general, and the girls would go off with their arms

about each other's waists, and singing, in the street substitute for the

stage whisper, “And 'er golden 'air was 'anging dahn 'er back!”

This yellow-haired and yellow-fingered sisterhood saw the game of life

pretty clearly, and it did not take them long to get abreast of Glory.

“Like this life, my dear?” “Go on! Do she look as if she liked it?”

“Perhaps I do, perhaps I don't,” said Glory.

“Tell that to the marines, my dear. I use ter be in a shop myself, but

I couldn't a-bear it. Give me my liberty, I say; and if a girl's got any

sort o' figure----Unnerstand, my dear?”

Late that night one of the girls came in breathless and cried: “Hooraa!

What d'ye think? Betty wants a dresser, and I've got the shop for ye,

my dear. Guinea a week and the pickings; and you go tomorrow night on

trial. By-bye!”

Glory's old infirmity came back upon her, and she felt hot and

humiliated. But her vanity was not so much wounded by the work that

she was offered as her honour was hurt by the work she was doing. Mrs.

Jupe's absences from home were now more frequent than ever. If the

business that took her abroad was akin to that which had taken her to

Polly Love----

To put an end to her uneasiness, Glory presented herself at the stage

door.

“You the noo dresser, miss?” said the doorkeeper. “Collins has orders to

look after you.--Collins!”

A scraggy, ugly, untidy woman who was passing--through an inner door

looked back and listened.

“Come along of me then,” she said, and Glory followed her, first down

a dark passage, then through a dusty avenue between stacks of scenery,

then across the open stage, up a flight of stairs, and into a room of

moderate size which had no window and no ventilation and contained three

cheval glasses, a couch, four cane-bottom chairs, three small toilet

tables with gas jets suspended over them, three large trunks, some boxes

of cigarettes, and a number of empty champagne bottles. Here there was

another woman as scraggy and untidy as the first, who bobbed her head at

Glory and then went on with her work, which was that of taking gorgeous

dresses out of one of the trunks and laying them on the end of the

couch.

“She told me to show you her first act,” said the woman called Collins,

and, throwing open another of the trunks, she indicated some of the

costumes contained in it.

It was a new world to Glory, and there was something tingling and

electrical in the atmosphere about her. There were the shouts and curses

of the scene-shifters on the stage, the laughing voices of the chorus

girls going by the door, and all the multitudinous noises of the theatre

before the curtain rises. Presently there was a rustle of silk, and

two young ladies came bouncing into the room. One was tall and pink

and white, like a scarlet runner, the other was little and dainty. They

stared at Glory, and she was compelled to speak.

“Miss Bellman, I presume?”

“Ye mean Betty, down't ye?” said the tall lady, and at that moment

Betty herself arrived. She was a plump person with a kind of vulgar

comeliness, and Glory had a vague sense of having seen her before

somewhere.

“So ye've came,” she said, and she took possession of Glory straightway.

“Help me off of my sealskin.”

Glory did so. The others were similarly disrobed, and in a few moments

their three ladyships were busy before the toilet tables with their

grease and rose-pink and black pencils.

Glory was taking down the hair of her stout ladyship, and her stout

ladyship was looking at Glory in the glass.

“Not a bad face, girls, eh?”

The other two glanced at Glory approvingly. “Not bad,” they answered,

and then hummed or whistled as they went on with their making-up.

“Oh, \_thank\_ you,” said Glory, with a low courtesy, and everybody

laughed. It was really very amusing. Suddenly it ceased to be so.

“And what's it's nyme, my dear?” said the little lady.

A sort of shame at using in this company the name that was sacred to

home, to the old parson, and to John Storm, came creeping over Glory

like a goosing of the flesh, and by the inspiration of a sudden memory

she answered, “Gloria.”

The little lady paused with the black pencil at her eyebrows, and said:

“My! What a nyme for the top line of a bill!”

“Ugh! Mykes me feel like Sundays, though,” said the tall lady with a

shudder.

“Irish, my dear?”

“Something of that sort,” said Glory.

“Brought up a laidy, I'll be bound?”

“My father was a clergyman,” said Glory, “but----”

A sudden peal of laughter stopped her, whereupon she threw up her head,

and her eyes flashed: but her stout ladyship patted her hands and said:

“No offence, Glo, but you re'lly mustn't--they're all clergymen's

daughters, doncher know?”

A sharp knock came to the door, followed by the first call of the

call-boy. “Half-hour, ladies.” Then there was much bustle and some

irritation in the dressing-room and the tuning up of the orchestra

outside. The knock came again. “Curtain up, please.” The door was thrown

open, the three ladies swept out--the tall one in tights, the little one

in a serpentine skirt, the plump one in some fancy costume--and Glory

was left to gather up the fragments, to listen to the orchestra, which

was now in full power, to think of it all and to laugh.

The ladies returned to the dressing-room again and again in the coarse

of the performance, and when not occupied with the changing of their

dresses they amused themselves variously. Sometimes they smoked

cigarettes, sometimes sent Collins for brandy and soda, sometimes talked

of their friends in front: 'Lord Johnny's 'ere again. See 'im in the

prompt box? It's 'is sixtieth night this piece, and there's only

been sixty-nine of the run--and sometimes they discussed the audience

generally: “Don't know what's a-matter with 'em to-night; ye may work

yer eyes out and ye can't get a 'and.”

The curtain came down at length, the outdoor costumes were resumed, the

call-boy cried “Carriages, please,” the ladies answered “Right ye are,

Tommy,” her plump ladyship nodded to Glory, “You'll do middling, my

dear, when ye get yer 'and in”; and then nothing was left but the dark

stage, the blank house, and the “Good-night, miss,” of the porter at the

stage door.

So these were favourites of the footlights! And Glory Quayle was

dressing and undressing them and preparing them for the stage! Next

morning, before rising, Glory tried to think it out. Were they so very

beautiful? Glory stretched up in bed to look at herself in the glass,

and lay down again with a smile. Were they so much cleverer than other

people? It was foolishness to think of it, for they were as empty as a

drum. There must be some explanation if a girl could only find it out.

The second night at the theatre passed much like the first, except that

the ladies were visited between the acts by a group of fellow-artistes

from another company, and then the free-and-easy manners of familiar

intercourse gave way to a style that was most circumspect and precise,

and, after the fashion of great ladies, they talked together of morning

calls and leaving cards and five-o'clock tea.

There was a scene in the performance in which the three girls sang

together, and Glory crept out to the head of the stairs to listen. When

she returned to the dressing-room her heart was bounding, and her eyes,

as she saw them in the glass, seemed to be leaping out of her head. It

was ridiculous! To think of all that fame, all that fuss about voices

like those, about singing like that, while she--if she could only get a

hearing!

But the cloud had chased the sunshine from her face in a moment, and

she was murmuring again, “O God, do not punish a vain, presumptuous

creature!”

All the same she felt happy and joyous, and on the third night she was

down at the theatre earlier than the other dressers, and was singing to

herself as she laid out the costumes, for her heart was beginning to be

light. Suddenly she became aware of some one standing at the open door.

It was an elderly man, with a bald head and an owlish face. He was the

stage manager; his name was Sefton.

“Go on, my girl,” he said. “If you've got a voice like that, why don't

you let somebody hear it?”

Her plump ladyship arrived late that night, and her companions were

dressed and waiting when she swept into the room like a bat with

outstretched wings, crying: “Out o' the wy! Betty Bellman's coming!

She's lyte.”

There were numerous little carpings, backbitings, and hypocrisies during

the evening, and they reached a climax when Betty said, “Lord Bobbie is

coming to-night, my dear.” “Not if \_I\_ know it, my love,” said the

tall lady. “We are goin' to supper at the Nell Gwynne Club, dearest.”

“Surprised at ye, my darling.” “\_You\_ are a nice one to preach, my pet!”

After that encounter two of their ladyships, who were kissing

and hugging on the stage, were no longer on speaking terms in the

dressing-room, and as soon as might be after the curtain had fallen,

the tall lady and the little one swept out of the place with mysterious

asides about a “friend being a friend,” and “not staying there to see

nothing done shabby.”

“If she don't like she needn't, my dear,” said the boycotted one, and

then she dismissed Glory for the night with a message to the friend who

would be waiting on the stage.

The atmosphere of the dressing-room had become oppressive and stifling

that night, and, notwithstanding the exaltation of her spirits since the

stage manager had spoken to her, Glory was sick and ashamed. The fires

of her ambition were struggling to burn under the drenching showers that

had fallen upon her modesty, and she felt confused and compromised.

As she stepped down the stairs the curtain was drawn up, the auditorium

was a void, the stage dark, save for a single gas jet that burned at the

prompter's wing, and a gentleman in evening dress was walking to and fro

by the extinguished footlights. She was about to step up to the man when

she recognised him, and turning on her heel she hurried away. It was

Lord Robert Ure, and the memory that had troubled her at the first sight

of Betty was of the woman who had ridden with Polly Love on the day of

the Lord Mayor's show.

Feeling hot and foolish and afraid, she was scurrying through the dark

passages when some one called her. It was the stage manager.

“I should like to hear your voice again, my dear. Come down at eleven in

the morning, sharp. The leader of the orchestra will be here to play.”

She made some confused answer of assent, and then found herself in the

back seat, panting audibly and taking long breaths of the cold night

air. She was dizzy and was feeling, as she had never felt before, that

she wanted some one to lean upon. If anybody had said to her at that

moment, “Come out of the atmosphere of that hot-bed, my child, it is

full of danger and the germs of death,” she would have left everything

behind her and followed him, whatever the cost or sacrifice. But she had

no one, and the pain of her yearning and the misery of her shame were

choking her.

Before going home she walked over to the hospital; but no, there was

still no letter from John Storm. There was one from Drake, many days

overdue:

“Dear Glory: Hearing that you call for your letters, I write to ask if

you will not let me know where you are and how the world is using you.

Since the day we parted in St. James's Park I have often spoken of you

to my friend Miss Macquarrie, and I am angry with myself when I remember

what remarkable talents you have, and that they are only waiting for the

right use to be made of them.

“Yours most kindly,

“F. H. N. Drake.”

“Many thanks, good Late-i'-th'-day,” she thought, and she was crushing

the latter in her hand when she saw there was a postscript:

“P. S.--This being the Christmas season, I have given myself the

pleasure of sending a parcel of Yuletide goodies to your dear old

grandfather and his sweet and simple household; but as they have

doubtless long forgotten me, and I do not wish to embarrass them

with, unnecessary obligations, I will ask you not to help them to the

identification of its source.”

She straightened out the letter and folded it, put it in her pocket and

returned home. Another letter was waiting for her there. It was from the

parson:

“So you sent us a Christmas-box after all! That was just like my

runaway, all innocent acting and make-believe. What joy we had of

it!--Rachel and myself, I mean, for we had to carry on the fiction that

Aunt Anna knew nothing about it, she being vexed at the thought of our

spendthrift spending so much money. Chalse brought it into the parlour

while Anna was upstairs, and it might have been the ark going up to

Jerusalem it entered in such solemn stillness. Oh, dear! oh, dear! The

bun-loaf, and the almonds, and the cheese, and the turkey, and the pound

of tobacco, and the mull of snuff! On account of Anna everything had

to be conducted in great quietness, but it was a terrible leaky sort of

silence, I fear, and there were hot and hissing whispers. God bless you

for your thought and care of us! Coming so timely, it is like my dear

one herself, a gift that cometh from the Lord; and when people ask me if

I am not afraid that my granddaughter should be all alone in that great

and wicked Babylon, I tell them: 'No; you don't know my Glory; she is

all courage and nerve and power, a perfect bow of steel, quivering with

sympathy and strength.'”

IX.

Christmas had come and gone at the Brotherhood, and yet the project was

unfulfilled. John himself had delayed its fulfilment from one trivial

cause after another. The night was too dark or not dark enough; the moon

shone or was not shining. His real obstacle was his superstitious fear.

The scheme was very easy of execution, and the Father himself had made

it so. This, and the Father's trust in him, had almost wrecked the

enterprise. Only his own secret anxieties, which were interpreted to his

consciousness by the sight of Brother Paul's wasting face, sufficed to

sustain his purpose.

“The man's dying. It can not be unpleasing to God.”

He said this to himself again and again, as one presses the pain in

one's side to make sure it is still there. Under the shadow of

the crisis his character was going to ruin. He grew cunning and

hypocritical, and could do nothing that was not false in reality or

appearance. When the Father passed him he would drop his head, and it

was taken for contrition, and he was commended for humility.

It was now the last day of the year, and therefore the last of his duty

at the door.

“It must be to-night,” he whispered, as Paul passed him.

Paul nodded. Since the plan of escape had been projected he had lost all

will of his own and become passive and inert.

How the day lingered! And when the night came it dragged along with feet

of lead! It seemed as if the hour of evening recreation would never

end. Certain of the brothers who had been away on preaching missions

throughout the country had returned for the Feast of the Circumcision,

and the house was bright with fresh faces and cheerful voices. John

thought he had never before heard so much laughter in the monastery.

But the bell rang for Compline, and the brothers passed into church. It

was a cold night, the snow was trodden hard, and the wind was rising.

The service ended, and the brothers returned to the house with clasped

hands and passed up to their cells in silence, leaving Brother Paul at

his penance in the church.

Finally the Father put up his hood and went out to lock the gate, and

the dog, who took this for his signal, shambled up and followed him.

When he returned he shuddered and shrugged his shoulders.

“A bitter night, my son,” he said. “It's like courting death to go out

in it. Heaven help all homeless wanderers on a night like this!”

He was wiping the snow from his slippers.

“So this is the last day of your penance, Brother Storm, and to-morrow

morning you will join us in the community room. You have done well; you

have fought a good fight and resisted the assaults of Satan. Good-night

to you, my son, and God bless you!”

He took a few steps forward and then stopped. “By the way, I promised

you the Life of Père Lacordaire, and you might come to my room and fetch

it.”

The Father's room was on the ground floor to the left of the staircase,

and it was entered from a corridor which cut the house across the

middle. The rooms that opened out of this corridor to the front looked

on the courtyard, and those to the back looked across the City in the

direction of the Thames. The Father's room opened to the back. It was

as bare of ornament as any of the cells, but it had a small fire, and a

writing-table on which a lamp was burning.

As they entered the room together the Father hung the key of the gate

on one of many hooks above the bed. It was the third hook from the end

nearest the window, and the key was an old one with very few wards. John

watched all this, and even observed that there were books on the floor,

and that a man might stumble if he did not walk warily. The Father

picked up one of them.

“This is the book, my son. A most precious document, the very mirror of

a living human soul. What touched me most, perhaps, were the Father's

references to his mother. A monk may not have his mother to himself, and

if the love of woman is much to him he is miserable indeed until he has

fixed his eyes on the most blessed among women. But the religious life

does not destroy natural affection. It only kills in order to bring

forth new life. The corn of wheat dies that it may live again. That

is the true Christian asceticism, my son, and so it is with our vows.

Goodnight!”

As John was coming out of the Father's room, he met Brother Andrew going

into it, with clean linen over one arm and a ewer of water in the other

hand. He threw on his bed in the alcove the book which the Father had

given him, and sat down on the form at the door and tried to strengthen

himself in his purpose.

“The man is dying for the sight of his sister. He can save her soul if

he can only see her. It can not be displeasing to the Almighty.”

When he lifted his head the house was silent, except for the wind that

whistled outside its walls. Presently there was a scarcely perceptible

click, as of a door closing, and Brother Andrew came from the direction

of the Superior's room. John called to him and he stepped up on tip-toe,

for the monk hates noise as an evil spirit. The sprawling features of

the big fellow were all smiles.

“Has the Father gone to bed?” said John.

“Yes.”

“Just gone?”

“No; half an hour ago.”

“Then he will be asleep by this time.”

“He was asleep before I left him.”

“So he doesn't lock his door on the inside?”

“No, never.”

“Does the Father sleep soundly?”

“Sometimes he does, and sometimes a cat would waken him.”

“Brother Andrew----”

“Yes.”

“Would you do something for me if I wanted, it very much?”

“You know I would.”

“Even if you had to run some risk?”

“I'm not afraid of that”

“And if I got you into trouble, perhaps?”

“But you wouldn't. \_You\_ wouldn't get anybody into trouble.”

John could go no further. The implicit trust in the simple face was too

much for him.

“What is it?” said Brother Andrew.

“Oh, nothing--nothing at all,” said John. “I was only trying you, but

you are too good to be tempted, and I am ashamed. You must go to bed

now.”

“Can I put out the lights for you?”

“No, I'm not ready yet. Ugh! what a cruel wind! A cold night for Brother

Paul in the church.”

“Tell me, Brother Storm, what is the matter with Brother Paul? He makes

me think of my mother, I don't know why.”

John made no answer, and the lay brother began to go upstairs. Two steps

up he stopped and whispered:

“Won't you let me do something for you, then?”

“Not to-night, Brother Andrew.”

“Good-night, Brother Storm.”

“Good-night, my lad.”

John listened to his footsteps until they stopped far overhead, and then

all was quiet. Only the whistling of the wind broke the stillness of

the peaceful house. He slid back the grating and looked out. All was

darkness except for the tiny gleam of coloured light that came from the

church, where Brother Paul sat to say his Rosary.

This fortified his courage, and he got up to put out the lamps in the

staircase and corridors. He began at the top, and as he came down he

listened on every landing and looked carefully around. There was no

sound anywhere except the light fall of his own deadened footstep. His

superstitious fears came back upon him, and his restless conscience

created terrors. The old London mansion, with its mystic cells, seemed

full of strange shadows, and the wind howled around it like a fiend.

One by one he extinguished the lamps. The last of them hung in the hall

under the picture of Christ in his crown of thorns. As he put it out he

thought the eyes looked at him, and he shuddered.

It was now half-past ten, and time to carry out his project. The back

of his neck was aching and his breath was coming quick. With noiseless

steps he walked to the door of the Father's room and listened again.

Hearing nothing, he opened the door wide and stepped into the room.

The fire was slumbering out, but it cast a faint red glow on the ceiling

and on the bed. A soft light rested on the Father's face, and he was

sleeping peacefully. There was no sound except the wind in the chimney

and a whistle sounding from a steamer in the river.

To reach the key, where it hung above the bed, it was necessary to step

between the fire and the sleeping man. As John did so his black shadow

fell on the Father's face. He stretched out his hand for the key and

found that a bunch of other keys were now hanging over it. When he

removed them they jingled slightly, and then his heart stood still, but

the Father did not stir, and he took the key of the gate off the hook,

put the other keys back in their place, and turned to go.

The dog began to howl--somebody was playing music in the street--and the

open door made the wind to roar in the chimney. The Father sighed, and

John stood with a quivering heart and looked over his shoulder. But it

was only a deep human sigh uttered in sleep.

At the next moment John had returned to the corridor and closed the door

behind him. His throat was parched, his eyelids were twitching, and his

temples were beating like drums. He went gliding along like a thief, and

as he passed the picture of Christ in the darkness the wind seemed to be

crying “Judas!”

Back in the hall he dropped on to the form, for his knees could support

him no longer. Love and conscience, humanity and religion clamoured

loud in his heart and tore him in pieces. “Traitor!” cried one. “But the

man's dying!” cried another. “Judas!” “She is hovering on the brink

of hell and he may save her soul from death and damnation!” When the

struggle was over, conscience and religion were worsted, and he was more

cunning than before.

Then the clock chimed the three quarters, and he raised his head.

The streets, usually so quiet at that hour, were becoming noisy with

traffic. There were the shuffling of many feet on the hard snow and the

sharp crack of voices.

He opened the great door of the house with as little noise as possible

and stepped out into the courtyard. The bloodhound started from its

quarters and began to growl, but he silenced it with a word, and the

creature came up and licked his hand. He crossed the court with quick

and noiseless footsteps, lifted the latch of the sacristy and pushed

through into the church.

There was a low, droning sound in the empty place. It ran a space and

was then sucked in like the sound of the sea at the harbour steps.

Brother Paul was sitting in the chancel with a lamp on the stall by his

side. His head leaned forward, his eyes were closed, and the light on

his thin face made it look pallid and lifeless. John called to him in a

whisper.

“Paul!”

He rose quickly and followed John into the courtyard, looking wild and

weak and lost.

“But the lamp--I've forgotten it,” he said. “Shall I go back and put it

out?”

“How simple you are!” said John. “Somebody may be lying awake in the

house. Do you want him to see that you've left your penance an hour too

soon?”

“True.”

“Come this way--quietly.”

They passed on tip-toe to the passage leading to the street, where some

flickering gleams of the light without fell over them.

“Where's your hat?” said John.

“I forgot that too--I left it in the church.”

“Take mine,” said John, “and put up your hood and button your

cassock--it's a cruel night.”

“But I'm afraid,” said Paul.

“Afraid of what?”

“Now that the time has come I'm afraid to learn the truth about her.

After all uncertainty is hope, you know, and then----”

“Tut! Be a man! Don't give way at the last moment. Here, tie my

handkerchief about your neck! How helpless you are, though! I've half a

mind to go myself instead.”

“But you don't know what I want to say, and if you did you couldn't say

it.”

“Then listen! Are you listening?”

“Yes.”

“Go to the hospital where your sister used to be a nurse.”

“Martha's Vineyard?”

“Ask for Nurse Quayle--will you remember?”

“Nurse Quayle.”

“If she is on night duty she will see you at once. But if she is on day

duty she may be in bed and asleep, and in that case----”

“What?”

“Here, take this letter. Have you got it?”

“Yes.”

“Give it to the porter. Tell him it comes from the former chaplain--you

remember. Say it concerns a matter of great importance, and ask him to

send it up to the dormitories immediately. Then----”

“Well?”

“Then \_she\_ must tell you what to do next.”

“But if she is out?”

“She may be-this is New Year's Eve.”

“Ah!”

“Wait in the porch till she comes in again.”

John's impetuous will was carrying everything before it, and the

helpless creature began to overwhelm him with grateful blessings.

“Pooh! We'll not talk of that.... Have you any money?”

“No.”

“Neither have I. I brought nothing here except the little in my purse,

and I gave that up on entering.”

“I don't want any--I can walk.”

“It will take you an hour then.”

A clock was striking somewhere. “Hush! One, two, three ... eleven

o'clock. It will be midnight when you get there. Now go!”

The key was grating in the lock of the gate. “Remember Lauds at six in

the morning.”

“I'll be back at five.”

“And I'll open the gate at 5.30. Only six hours to do everything.”

“Good-night, then.”

“Wait!”

“What is it?”

Paul was in the street, but John was in the darkness of the passage.

“Very likely you'll cross London in a cab with her.”

“My sister?”

“Your sister went to live somewhere in St. John's Wood, I remember.”

“St. John's Wood?”

“Tell her”--John was striving to keep his voice firm--“tell her I am

happy--and cheerful--and looking strong and well, you know.”

“But you're not. You're too good, and you're wearing away in my----”

“Tell her I am often thinking of her, and if she has anything to

say--anything to send--any word--any message ... it can't be displeasing

to the Almighty.... But no matter! Go, go!”

The key had grated in the lock again, the lay brother was gone, and John

was left alone.

“God pity and forgive me!” he muttered, and then he turned away.

The traffic in the streets was increasing every moment, and as he

stumbled across the courtyard a drunken man going by the gate stopped

and cried into the passage, “Helloa, there! I'm a-watchin' of ye!” The

bloodhound leaped up and barked, but John hurried into the house and

clashed the door.

He sat on the form and tried to compose himself. He thought of Paul as

he had seen him at the last moment--the captured eagle with the broken

wing scudding into the night, the night of London, but free, free!

In his mind's eye he followed him through the streets--down Bishopsgate

Street into Threadneedle Street and along Cheapside to St. Paul's

churchyard. Crowds of people would be there to-night waiting for the

striking of the clock at midnight that they might raise a shout and wish

each other a happy New Year.

That made him think of Glory. She would be there too, for she loved a

rich and abounding life. He could see her quite plainly in the midst of

the throng with her sparkling eyes and bounding step. It would be so new

to her, so human and so beautiful! Glory! Always Glory!

He thought he must have been dreaming, for suddenly the clocks were all

striking, first the clock in the hall, then the clocks of the churches

round about, and finally the great clock of the cathedral. Almost at the

same moment there was a distant sound like the rattle of musketry, and

then the church bells began to ring.

The noises in the street were now tumultuous. People were shouting and

laughing. Some of them were singing. At one moment it was the Salvation

chorus, at the next a music-hall ditty. First “At the Cross, at the

Cross,” then “Mr. 'enry 'awkins,” and then an unfamiliar ditty. With

measured steps over the hardened snow of the pavement there came

tramping along a line of boys and girls, crying:

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?

D'ye ken John Peel at the break of day?

D'ye ken John P-e-e-l----

Their shrill trebles broke like a rocket on the topmost note, and there

was loud laughter.

Glory again! Always, always Glory!

Then the scales fell from his eyes and he saw himself as he was, a

self-deluded man and a cheat. The impulses that had prompted him to this

night's work had really centred in Glory. It had been Glory first and

Glory last, and his pity for Brother Paul and his fear for the fate of

Polly had been only a falsehood and pretence.

The night wind was still howling about the house. Its noise mingled

with the peal of the church bells, and together they seemed to utter the

voices of mocking fiends: Judas! Traitor! Fool! Fool! Traitor! Judas!

He covered his ears with his hands and his head fell into his breast.

X.

“The Little Turnstile,

“New Year's Eve.

“Hooraa! hooraa!

“Feeling like bottled yeast this evening and liable to go off, I thank

my stars I have three old babies at home to whom I am bound to tell

everything. So lizzen, lizzen for all! Know ye then, all men (and women)

by these presents that there is a gentleman in London who predicts

wonderful things for Glory. His name is Sefton, and I came to know him

through three ladies--I call them the Three Graces--whose acquaintance

I have made by coming to live here. He is only an old mushroom with a

bald, white head; and if I believed everything their ladyships say I

should conclude that he is one of those who never sin except twice a

year, and that is all the time before Christmas and all the time after

it. But their Graces belong to that saintly sisterhood who would take

away the devil's character if they needed it (they don't), and though

the mushroom's honour were as scarce as the middle cut in salmon, yet in

common loyalty Glory would have to believe in it.

“It is all about my voice. Hearing it by accident when I was humming

about the house like a blue-bottle, he asked me to let him hear it again

in a place where he could judge of it to more advantage. That turned out

to be a theatre--yes, indeed, a theatre--but it was the middle of the

morning, and nobody was there except ourselves and a couple of cleaners,

so Aunt Anna needn't be afraid. Yes, the chief of the orchestra was

present, and he sat before a piano on the edge of the maelstrom, in

what we should call the High Bailiff's pews--but they call them the

stalls--while the mushroom himself went back to the cavernous depths of

the body, which in a theatre they have properly christened the pit, and

this morning it looked like the bottomless one.

“Lor'-a-massey! Ever see the inside of a theatre in the daytime? Of

course you've not, my dears. It is what the world itself was the day

before the first day--without form and void, and darkness is on the face

of the deep. Not a ray of daylight anywhere, except the adulterated kind

that comes mooching round corridors and prowling in at half-open doors,

and floating through the sepulchral gloom like the sleepy eyes of the

monsters that terrified me in the caves at Gob-ny-Deigan when I used to

play pirate, you remember.

“The gentlemen had left me alone on the stage with five or six

footlights--which they ought to call face-lights--flashing in my eyes,

and when the pianist began to vamp and I to sing it was like pitching

my voice into a tunnel, and I became so dreadfully nervous that I was

forced to laugh. That seemed to vex my unseen audience, who thought me

'rot'; so I said, 'Let there be more light then.' and there was more

light, 'and let the piano cease from troubling,' and it was so. Then I

just stiffened my back and gave them one of mother's French songs, and

after the first verse I called out to the manager at the back,” Can

you hear me?' and he called back, 'Go on; it's splendid!' So I did

'Mylecharaine' in the Manx, and I suppose I acted both of my songs; but

I was only beginning to be aware that my voice in that great place was

a little less like a barrel-organ than usual when suddenly there came

a terrific clatter, such as comes with the seventh wave on the shingle,

and my two dear men in the dark were clapping the skin of their hands

off!

“Oh, my dears! my dears! If you only knew how for weeks and weeks I

had been moaning and lamenting that it was because I wasn't clever that

people took no notice of me, you would forgive a vain creature when she

said to herself, 'My daughter, you are really somebody, after all--you,

you, you!' It was a beautiful moment, though, and when the old mushroom

came back to the stage saying: 'What a voice! What expression! What

nature!' I felt like falling on his bald head and kissing it, not being

able to speak for lumps in the throat and feeling like the Methodist

lady who poured out whisky for the class leaders after they had

presented her with a watch, and then told the reporters to say she had

suitably responded.

“Heigho! I have talked about the fashionable people I meet in London,

but I don't want to be one of them. They do nothing but rush about,

dress, gossip, laugh, love, and plunge into all the delights of

life. That is not my idea of existence. I am ambitious. I want to do

something. I am tired in my soul of doing nothing. Yes, it \_has\_ been

that all along, though I didn't like to tell you so before. There are

people who are born in the midst of greatness and they don't know how to

use it. But to be one of the world's celebrities, that is so different!

To have won the heart of the world, so that the world knows you and

thinks of you and loves you! Say it is by your voice you do it and that

your world is the concert hall, or even the music hall--what matter? You

needn't \_live\_ music hall, whatever the life inside of it. And then that

great dark void peopled with faces; that laugh or cry just as you please

to make them--confess; that it would be magnificent, my dear ones!

“I am to go again to-night to hear what Mr. Sefton has to propose, but

already this dingy little bedroom smiles upon me, and even the broken

tiles in the backyard might be the pavement of paradise! If it is true

what he tells me---Well, he that hath the bride is the bridegroom, and

if my doings hereafter don't make your hair curl I will try to show the

inhabitants of this stupid old earth what a woman can do in spite of

every disadvantage. I shall not be sorry to leave this place either. The

rats in these old London houses (judging by their cries of woe) hold a

nightly carnival for the eating up of the younger members of the family.

And then Mrs. Jupe and Mr. Jupe--Mr. Dupe I call him--she deceives him

so dreadfully with her gadding about----But anon, anon, good people!

“It is New Year's Eve to-day, and nearly nine months since I came up to

London. \_Tempus fugit!\_ In fact \_tempus\_ is \_fugit\_-ing most fearfully,

considering that I am twenty-one on Sunday next, you know, and that I

haven't begun to do anything really. The snowdrops must be making a peep

at Glenfaba by this time, and Aunt Rachel will be cutting slips of the

rose trees and putting them in pots. Yandher place must he \_urromassy\_

[\* Out of mercy.] nice though, with snow on the roof and the sloping

lawn, and the windows glistening with frost--just like a girl in her

confirmation veil as she stands hack to look at herself in the glass.

I intend to see the New Year in this time on the outside of St. Paul's

Cathedral, where people congregate in thousands as twelve o'clock

approaches to carry on the beautiful fiction that there is still only

one clock in London, and they have to hold their noses in the air to

watch for the moment when it is going to strike. But in the midst of the

light and life of this splendid city I know my heart will go back with

a tender twinge to the little dark streets on the edge of the sea, where

the Methodist choirs will be singing, 'Hail, smiling morn,' preparatory

to coffee and currant cake.

“Who will be your 'first foot' this year, I wonder? It was John Storm

last year, you remember, and being as dark as a gipsy, he made a

perfect \_qualtagh\_. [\* Manx for “first foot.”] And how we laughed when,

disguised in the snow that was falling at the time, he pretended to be

a beggar and came in just as grandfather was reading the bit about the

Good Shepherd, and how he loved his lambs--and then I found him out! Ah

me!

“I am looking perfectly dazzling in a new hat to-day, having been going

about hitherto in one of those little frights that used to be cocked up

on the top of your hair like a hen on a cornstack. But now I am carrying

about the Prince of Wales's feathers, and if he could only see me

himself in them!----

“You see what a scatter-brained creature I am! Leaving the hospital has

made me grow so much younger every day that I am almost afraid I may

come to contemplate short frocks. But really it's the first time I've

looked nice for an eternity, and now I entirely retract and repent me of

all I said about wishing to be a man. Being a girl, I'll put up with it,

and if all the old mushroom says on that head also is true---- But then

men are such funny things, bless them! Glory.

“P.S.--No word from John Storm yet. Apparently he never thinks of us

now--of me at all events--and I suppose he has resigned himself and

taken the vows. That's one kind of religion, I dare say, but I can't

understand it; and I don't know how a dog, even, can be nailed up to a

wall and not go mad. In the night lying in bed I sometimes think of

him. A dark cell, a bench for a bed, a crucifix, and no other furniture,

praying with trembling limbs and chattering teeth--No; such things are

too high for me; I can not reach to them.

“It seems impossible that \_he\_ can be in London too. What a place this

London is! Such a mixture! Fashion, religion, gaiety, devotion, pride,

depravity, wealth, poverty! I find that for a girl to succeed in London

her moral colour must be heightened a little. \_Pinjane\_ [\* Manx dish,

like Devonshire junket] alone won't do. Give her a slush of \_pissaves\_

[\* Preserves] and she'll go down sweeter. Angels are not wanted here at

all. The only angels there are in London are kept framed in the church

windows, and I half suspect that even they were women once, and liked

bread and butter. And then Nell Gwynne's flag floats from the steeple

of St. Martin's in the Fields, and now and again they ring the bells for

her!”

XI.

At eleven o'clock that night Glory was putting on her hat and cloak to

return home when the call-boy came to the dressing-room door to say that

the stage manager was waiting to see her. With a little catch, in her

breath, and then with a tightening of the heart-strings, she followed

him to the stage manager's office. It was a stuffy place over the

porter's lodge, approached by a flight of circular iron stairs and

lumbered with many kinds of theatrical property.

“Come in, my dear,” said the stage manager, and pushing away some models

of scenery he made room for her on a sofa which stood by a fast-dying

fire. Then shutting the door, he bobbed his head at her and winked with

both eyes, and said in a familiar whisper:

“It's all right, my dear. I've settled that little matter for you.”

“Do you mean----” began Glory, and then she waited with parted lips.

“It's as good as done, my dear. Sit down.” Glory had risen in her

excitement. “Sit down and I'll tell you everything.”

He had spoken to his management. “Gentlemen,” he had said, “unless I'm

mistaken I've found a prize.” They had laughed. He was always finding

prizes. But he knew what he was talking about, and they had given him

\_carte blanche\_.

“You think there is really some likelihood, then----” began Glory, with

the catch in her breath again, for her throat was thick and her breast

was heaving.

“Sit down, now do sit down, my dear, and listen.”

He was suave, he was flattering, he was intimate, he was, coaxing. She

was to leave everything to him. Of course, there was much to be done

yet. She had a wonderful voice; it was finer than music. She had style

as well; it was astonishing how she had come by it. Only a dresser,

too--not even in the chorus. But stars were never turned out by Nature.

She had many things to learn, and would have to be coached up carefully

before she could be brought out. He had done it for others, though, and

he could do it for her; and if----

Glory's eyes were shining and her heart was beating like a drum.

“Then you think that eventually--if I work hard--after years

perhaps----”

“You can't do it on your own, my dear, so leave yourself in my hands

entirely, and don't whisper a word about it yet.”

“Ah!” It was like a dream coming true; she could scarcely believe in it.

The stage manager became still more suave and flattering and familiar.

If she “caught on,” there was no knowing what he might not get for

her--ten pounds a week--fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, even fifty

perhaps.

Glory's palpitation was becoming painful, and at the bottom of her

heart there was a certain fear of this sudden tide of fortune, as if

Providence had somehow made a mistake and would as suddenly find it out.

To appease her conscience she began to think of home and how happy she

might make everybody there if God was really going to be so good to her.

They should want for nothing; they should never know a poor day again.

Meantime the stage manager was painting another picture. A girl didn't

go a-begging if he once took her up. There was S----. She was only an

“auricomous” damsel, serving in a tobacconist's shop in the Haymarket

when he first found her, and now where was she?

“Of course, I've no interest of my own to serve, my dear--none whatever.

And there'll be lots of people to tempt you away from me when your name

is made.”

Glory uttered some vehement protest, and then was lost in her dreams

again.

“Well, well, we'll see,” said the stage manager. He was looking at her

with glittering eyes.

“Do you know, my dear, you are a very fine-looking young woman?”

Glory's head was down, her face was flushed, and she was turning her

mother's pearl ring around her finger. He thought she was overwhelmed by

his praises, and coming closer, he said:

“Dare say you've got a good stage figure too, eh? Pooh! Only business,

you know! But you mustn't be shy with me, my dear. And besides, if I am

to do all this for you, you must do something for me sometimes.”

She hardly heard him. Her eyes were still glistening with the far-off

look of one who gazes on a beautiful vision.

“You are so good,” she said. “I don't know what to say, or how to thank

you.”

“This way,” he whispered, and leaning over to her he lifted her face and

kissed her.

Then her poor dream of glory and grandeur and happiness was dispelled

in a moment, and she awoke with a sense of outrage and shame. The man's

praises were flattery; his predictions were a pretence; he had not

really meant it at all, and she had been so simple as to believe

everything.

“Oh!” she said, with the feeble, childish cry of one who has received

a pistol wound in battle. And then she rose and turned to go. But the

stage manager, who was laughing noisily out of his hot red face, stepped

between her and the door.

“My dear child, you can't mean--a trifle like that--!”

“Open the door, please,” she said in her husky voice.

“But surely you don't intend--In this profession we think nothing, you

know----”

“Open the door, sir!”

“Really--upon my word----”

When she came to herself again she was out in the dark back street, and

the snow was hard and dirty under foot, and the wind was high and cold,

and she was running along and crying like a disappointed child.

The bitterest part of it all was the crushing certainty that she had no

talents and no chances of success, and that the man had only painted up

his fancy picture as a means of deceiving her. Oh, the misery of being a

woman! Oh, the cruelty of this great, glorious, devilish London, where a

girl, if she was poor and alone, could live only by her looks!

With God knows what lingering remnant of expectation, but feeling broken

and beaten after her brave fight for life, and with the weak woman

uppermost at last, she had turned toward the hospital. It was nearly

half-past eleven when she got there, and Big Ben was chiming the half

hour as she ascended the steps. Bracing herself up, she looked in at the

porter's door with a face that was doing its best to smile.

“Any letters to-night, porter?”

“Not to-night, miss.”

“No? Well--none to get, none to answer, you know. Happy New Year to

you!”

But there was a sob in her laughter, and the man said: “I'd be sorry to

miss your face, nurse, but if you'll leave your address I'll send your

letters on and save you the journey so late at night.”

“Oh, no-no, there'll be no more letters now, porter, and--I'll not come

again. Here!”

“No, no, miss.”

“Yes, yes, you must.”

She forced a shilling into the porter's hand in spite of his protests,

and then fled from the look in his face which seemed to her to say that

he would like to return her sixpence.

John Storm was lost to her. It was foolishness to go on expecting

to hear from him. Had he not told her that the rule under which the

brothers lived in community forbade them to write and receive letters

except by special permission? But she had expected that something would

happen--some accident, some miracle, she hardly knew what. That dream

was over now; she was alone; it was no use deceiving herself any longer.

She went home by the back streets, for people were peering into her

face, and she thought perhaps she had been crying. Late as it was, being

New Year's Eve, there were groups about every corner, and in some of the

flagged courts and alleys little girls were dancing to the music of the

Italian organ man or turning catherine-wheels. As she was going down

Long Acre a creachy voice saluted her.

“Evening, miss! Going home early, ain't ye?”

It was a miserable-looking woman in clothes that might have been stolen

from a scarecrow.

“Market full to-night, my dear? Look as if the dodgers had been at ye.

Live? I live off of the lane. But lor' bless ye, I've lived in a-many

places! Seen the day I lived in Soho Square. I was on the 'alls then.

Got a bit quisby on my top notes, you know, and took the scarlet

fever--soldier, I mean, my dear. But what's the use of frettin'?

“I likes to be jolly, and I allwiz is. Doing now? Selling flowers

outside the theatres--police is nasty if you've got nothink. Ain't I

going home? Soon as I get a drain of white satin. Wish you luck, my

dear!”

As she came up to the shop in the Turnstile she could hear that it

was noisy with the voices of men and girls, so she turned back through

Lincoln's-Inn Fields and passed down to Fleet Street. It was approaching

twelve o'clock by this time, and streams of people were flowing in

the direction of St. Paul's Cathedral. Glory turned eastward also and

allowed herself to be carried along with the current which babbled and

talked like a river in the night.

Immediately in front of her there was a line of girls walking arm-in-arm

across the width of the pavement. They were factory girls in big hats

with ostrich feathers, and as they skipped along with their free step

they sang snatches of Salvation hymns and music-hall songs. All at once

they gave a shrill peal of laughter, and one of them cried, “Tell me

what it is and I'll give it a nyme.” At the next moment a strange figure

was forging past their line, going westward with long strides. It was

a man in the habit of a monk, with long black cassock and broad-brimmed

hat. Glory caught a glimpse of his face as he passed her. It was a

hungry, eager face, with big, melancholy eyes, and it seemed to her that

she must have seen it before somewhere. The wind was very cold, and the

great cross on the dome of the cathedral stood out like a beacon against

flying clouds.

St. Paul's churchyard was thronged with noisy, happy people, and down to

the last minute before the hour they shouted and joked and laughed. Then

there was a hush, the great crowds seemed to hold their breath as if

they had been a single living creature, and every face was turned upward

to the clock. The clock struck, the bells of the cathedral began to

ring, the people cheered and saluted each other and shook hands on every

side, and then the dense mass broke up.

Glory could have cried for joy of it all--it was so simple, so human,

so childlike. But she listened to the laughter and salutations of the

people about her and felt more lonely than the Bedouin in the desert;

she remembered the bubbling hopes that had carried her through the day,

and her heart fell low; she thought of the letter which she had posted

home on her way to the theatre, and two great tears came rolling from

her eyes.

The face of the monk tormented her, and suddenly she bethought herself

whose face it must have been. It must have been the face of Polly Love's

brother. He belonged to the Bishopsgate Fathers, and had once been a

patient in the hospital, and perhaps he was going there now on some

errand or urgent message--to the doctors or to----

“It was foolish not to leave my address when the porter asked me,” she

thought. She would go back and do so. There could be no harm in that;

and if anything had really happened, if John----

“Happy New Year to you, my dear!”

Somebody in the drifting crowd was standing before her and blocking

the way. It was Agatha Jones in a mock seal-skin coat and big black

hat surmounted by black feathers, and with Charlie Wilkes (with his

diminutive cap pushed back from his oily fringe and pimpled forehead)

leaning heavily on her arm.

“Well, I never! Who'd have thought of meeting you in St. Paul's

churchyawd!”

Glory tried to laugh and to return the salutation over the noises of the

people and the clangour of the bells. And then Aggie put her face close,

as women do who are accustomed to talking in the streets, and said:

“Thought we'd seen the lahst of you, my dear, when you went off that

night sudden. Selling programmes somewhere else now?”

“Something of that sort,” said Glory.

“I'm not. I've been left the old red church this fortnight and more.

Charlie's got me on the clubs. But my word!” turning to Charlie, “it's

her as oughter be there, my dear!”

“She cheeks me out,” said Charlie, “as you'll knock the stuffing out of

Betty Bellman 'erself if you once myke a stawt.”

And Aggie said: “I might get you to do a turn almost any Sunday, if you

like, my dear. There's always somebody as down't come, and they're glad

of an extra turn to tyke the number if she's only clever enough to get a

few 'ands. Going 'ome, dear?”

“Yes,” said Glory.

“Where d'ye live?” said Aggie, and Glory told her.

“I'll call for you Sunday night at eight, and if you down't tyke your

chawnce when you get it, you're a foolisher woman than I thought you

were, that's stright! By-bye!”

XII.

Always at half-past five in the morning the Father Superior began to

awaken the Brotherhood. It took him a quarter of an hour to pass through

the house on that errand, for the infirmities of his years were upon

him. During this interval John Storm had intended to open the gate to

Paul and then return the key to its place in the Father's room. The time

was short, and to lose no part of it he had resolved to remain awake the

whole night through.

There was little need to make a call on that resolution. With fear and

remorse he could not close his eyes, and from hour to hour he heard

every sound of the streets. At one o'clock, the voices singing outside

were strained and cracked and out of tune; at two, they were brutish

and drunken and mingled with shrieks of quarrelling; at three, there was

silence; at four, the butchers' wagons were rattling on the stones from

the shambles across the river to the meat markets of London, with the

carcasses of the thousands of beasts that were slaughtered overnight to

feed the body of the mammoth on the morrow; and at five, the postal vans

were galloping from the railway stations to the post-office with the

millions of letters that were to feed its mind.

At half-past five the Father had come out of his room and passed slowly

upstairs, and John Storm was in the courtyard opening the lock of the

outer gate. Although there was a feeling of morning in the freezing air

it was still quite dark.

“Paul,” he whispered, but there was no answer.

“Brother Paul!” he whispered again, and then waited, but there was no

reply.

It was not at first that he realized the tremendous gravity of what had

occurred--that Brother Paul had not returned, and that he must go back

to the house without him. He kept calling into the darkness until he

remembered that the Father would be down in his room again soon and

looking for the key where he had left it.

Back in the hall, he reproached himself with his haste, and concluded to

return to the gate. There would be time to do it; the Father was still

far overhead; his “Benedicamus Domino” was passing from corridor to

corridor; and Paul might be coming down the street.

“Paul! Paul!” he cried again, and opening the gate he looked out.

But there was no one on the pavement except a drunken man and a girl,

singing themselves home in the dead waste of the New Year's morning.

Then the truth fell on him like a thundercloud, and he hurried back to

the house for good. By this time the Father was coming down the stairs,

and had reached the landing of the first story. Snatching up from

the bed in the alcove the book which had been lying there all night

unregarded, he crept into the Father's room. He was coming out of it

when he came face to face with the Father himself, who was on the point

of going in.

“I have been returning the book you lent me,” he said, and then he tried

to steal away in his shame. But the Father held him a while in playful

remonstrance. The hours were not all saved that were stolen from the

night, and his swelled eyes this morning were a testimony to the musty

old maxim. Still, with a book like that, his diligence was not to be

wondered at, and it would be interesting to hear what he thought of it.

He couldn't say as yet. That wasn't to be wondered at either. Somebody

had said that a great book was like a great mountain--not to be seen to

the top while you were still too near to it.

John's duplicity was choking him. His eyes were averted from the

Father's face, for he had lost the power of looking straight at any

one, and he could see the key of the gate still shaking from the hook on

which his nervous fingers had placed it. When he escaped at length, the

Father asked him to ring the bell for Lauds, as Brother Andrew, whose

duty it was, had evidently overslept himself.

John rang the bell, and then took his lamp and some tapers from a shelf

in the hall and went out to the church to light the candles, for that

also was Brother Andrew's duty. As he was crossing the courtyard on his

way back to the house, he passed the Father going to open the gate.

“But what has become of your hat?” said the Father, and then, for the

first time, John remembered what he had done with it.

“I've lent--that is to say, I've lost it,” he answered, and then

stood with his eyes on the ground while the Father reproved him for

heedlessness of health, and so forth.

It is part of the perversity of circumstance that while an incident of

the greatest gravity is occurring, its ridiculous counterpart is usually

taking place by the side of it. When the religious had gathered in the

church it was seen that three of the stalls were vacant--Brother Paul's,

Brother Andrew's, and the Father Minister's. The service had hardly

begun when the bell was heard to ring again, and with a louder clangour

than before, whereupon the religious concluded that Brother Andrew had

awakened from his sleep, and was remembering with remorse his belated

duty.

But it was the Father Minister. That silent and severe person had

oftentimes rebuked the lay brother for his sleepiness, and this morning

he had himself been overcome by the same infirmity. Awakening suddenly

a little after six by the watch that hung by his bed, he had thought,

“That lazy fellow is late again--I'll teach him a lesson.” Leaping to

his feet (the monk sleeps in his habit), he had hastened to the bell

and rung it furiously, and then snatched up a taper and hurried down

the stairs to light the candles in the church. When he appeared at the

sacristy door with a lighted taper in his hand and confusion on his

face, the brothers understood everything at a glance, and not even the

solemnity of the service could smother the snufflings of their laughter.

The incident was a trivial one, but it diverted attention for a time

from the fact of Paul's absence, and when the religious went back to the

house and found Brother Andrew returned to his old duty as doorkeeper,

the laughter was renewed, and there was some playful banter.

The monk is so far a child that the least thing happening in the morning

is enough to determine the temper of the day, and as late as the hour

for breakfast the house was still rippling with the humour of the

Father Minister's misadventure. There was one seat vacant in the

refectory--Brother Paul's--and the Superior was the first to observe it.

With a twinkle in his eye, he said:

“I feel like Boy Blue this morning. Two of my stray sheep have come

home, bringing their tails behind them. Will anybody go in search of the

third?”

John Storm rose immediately, but a lay brother was before him, so he sat

down again with his white cheeks and quivering lips, and made an effort

to eat his breakfast.

The reader for the week recited the Scripture for the day, and then took

up the book which the brothers were hearing at their meals. It was the

Life and Death of Father Ignatius of St. Paul, and the chapter they had

come to dealt with certain amusing examples of vanities and foibles.

An evil spirit might have selected it with special reference to the

incidents of the morning, for at every fresh illustration the Father

Minister squirmed on his seat, and the brothers looked across at him and

laughed with a spice of mischief, and even a touch of malice.

John's eyes were on the door, and his heart was quivering, but the

messenger did not return during breakfast, and when it was over the

Superior rose without waiting for him and led the way to the community

room.

A fire was burning in the wide grate, and the room was cheerful with

reflected sun-rays, for the sun was shining in the courtyard and

glistening on the frosty boughs of the sycamore. It was a beautiful New

Year's morning, and the Father began to tell some timely stories. In

the midst of the laughter that greeted them the lay brother returned and

delivered his message. Brother Paul could not be found, and there was

not a sign of him anywhere in the house.

“That's strange,” said the religious.

“Perhaps he is in his cell,” said the Father.

“No, he is not there,” said the messenger, “and his bed has not been

slept in.”

“Now, that explains something,” said the Father. “I thought he didn't

answer when I knocked at his door in the morning, but my ears grow dull

and my eyes are failing me, and I told myself perhaps----”

“It's very strange'” said the religious, with looks of astonishment.

“But perhaps he staid all night at his penance in the church,” said the

Father.

“Apparently his hat did so at all events,” said one of the brothers. “I

saw it lying with his lamp on the stall in front of me.”

There was silence for a moment, and then the Father said with a smile:

“But my children are so amusing in such matters! Only this morning I had

to reprove Brother Storm for losing his hat somewhere, and now Brother

Paul----”

By an involuntary impulse, obscure to themselves, the brothers turned

toward John, who was standing in the recess of one of the windows with

his pale face looking out on the sunshine.

John was the first to speak.

“Father,” he said, “I have something to say to you.”

“Come this way,” said the Superior, and they passed out of the room

together.

The Father led the way to his room and closed the door behind them.

But there was little need for confession; the Father seemed to know

everything in an instant. He sat in his wicker chair before the fire and

rocked himself and moaned.

“Well, well, God's wrath comes up against the children of disobedience,

but we must do our best to bear our punishment.”

John Storm made no excuses. He had stood by the Father's chair and told

his story simply, without fear or remorse, only concealing that part of

it which concerned himself in relation to Glory.

“Yes, yes,” said the Father, “I see quite plainly how it has been. He

was like tinder, ready to take fire at a spark, and you were thinking I

had been hard and cruel and in-human.”

It was the truth; John could not deny it; he held down his head and was

silent.

“But shall I tell you why I refused that poor boy's petition? Shall I

tell you who he was, and how he came to be here? Yes, I will tell you.

Nobody in this house has heard it until now, because it was his secret

and mine and God's alone--not given me in confession, no, or it would

have to be locked in my breast forever. But you have thrust yourself

in between us, so you must hear everything, and may the Lord pity and

forgive you and help you to bear your burden!”

John felt that a cold damp was breaking out on his forehead, but he

clinched his moist hands and made ready to control himself.

“Has he ever spoken of another sister?”

“Yes, he has sometimes mentioned her.”

“Then perhaps you have been told of the painful and tragic event that

happened?”

“No,” said John, but something that he had heard at the board meeting

at the hospital returned at that moment with a stunning force to his

memory.

“His father, poor man, was one of my own people--one of the lay

associates of our society in the world outside. But his health gave way,

his business failed him, and he died in a madhouse, leaving his three

children to the care of a friend. The friend was thought to be a worthy,

and even a pious man, but he was a scoundrel and a traitor. The younger

sister--the one you know--he committed to an orphanage; the elder one he

deceived and ruined. As a sequel to his sin, she lived a life of shame

on the streets of London, and died by suicide at the end of it.”

John Storm put up one hand to his head as if his brain was bursting, and

with the other hand he held on to the Father's chair.

“That was bad enough, but there was worse to follow. Our poor Paul

had grown to be a man by this time, and Satan put it into his heart to

avenge his sister's dishonour. 'As the whirlwind passeth, so the wicked

are no more.' The betrayer of his trust was found dead in his room,

slain by an unknown assassin. Brother Paul had killed him.”

John Storm had fallen to his knees. If hell itself had opened at his

feet he could not have been stricken with more horror. In a voice

strangled by fear he stammered: “But why didn't you tell me this before?

Why have you hidden it until now?”

“Passions, my son, are the same in a monastery as outside of it, and I

had too much reason to fear that the saintliest soul in our Brotherhood

would have refused to live and eat and sleep in the same house with a

murderer. But the poor soul had come to me like a hunted beast, and who

was I that I should turn my back upon him? Before that he had tramped

through the streets and slept in the parks, under the impression that

the police were pursuing him, and thereby he had contracted the lung

disease from which he suffers still. What was I to do? Give him up to

the law? Who shall tell me how I could have held the balance level?

I took him into my house; I sheltered him; I made him a member of our

community; Heaven forgive me, I suffered myself to receive his vows.

It was for me to comfort his stricken body, for the Church to heal his

wounded soul; and as for his crime, that was in God's hands, and God

alone could deal with it.”

The Father had risen to his feet, and he spoke the last words with

uplifted hand.

“Now you know why I refused that poor boy's petition. I loved him as a

son, but neither the disease of his body nor the weakness of his mind

could break the firmness of the rule by which I held him. I knew that

Satan was dragging him away from me, and I would not give him up to the

sufferings and dangers which the Evil One was preparing for him in the

world. But how subtle are the temptations of the devil! He found the

weak place in my armour at last. He found you, my son--you; and he

tempted you by all your love, by all your pity, by all your tenderness,

and you fell, and this is the consequence.”

The Father clasped his hands at his breast and walked to and fro in the

little room.

“The bitterness of the world against religious houses is great already;

but if anything should happen now, if a crime should be committed, if

our poor brother, clad in the habit of our Order----”

He stopped and crossed himself and lifted His eyes, and said in a

tremulous whisper: “O God, whom have I in heaven but thee? My flesh and

my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion

forever.”

John had staggered to his feet like a drunken man. “Father,” he said,

“send me away from you. I am not fit to live by your side.”

The Father laid both hands on his shoulders. “And shall I lower my flag

to the enemy like that? There is only one way to defeat the devil, and

that is to defy him. No, no, my son, you shall remain with me to the

last.”

“Punish me, then. Give me penance. Let me be the lowest of the low and

the meanest of the mean. Only tell me what I am to do and I will do it.”

“Go back to the door and resume your duty as doorkeeper.”

John looked at the Father with an expression of bewilderment.

“I thought you had done with it, my son, but Heaven knew better. And

promise that when you are there you will pray for our wandering brother,

that he may not be allowed to fulfil the errand on which you sent him

out; pray that he may never find his sister, or anybody who knows her

and can tell him where she is and what has become of her; pray that

she may never cross his path to the last hour of life and the first

of death's sundering; promise to pray for this, my son, night and day,

morning and evening, with all your soul and strength, as you would pray

for God's mercy and your soul's salvation.”

John did not answer; he was like a man in a stupor. “Is it possible?” he

said. “Are you sending me back to the door? Can you trust me again?”

The Father stepped to the side of the bed and took the key of the gate

from its place under the shelf. “Take this key with you, too, because

for the future you are to be the keeper of the gate as well.”

John had taken the key mechanically, hardly hearing what was being said.

“Is it true, then--have you got faith in me still?”

The Father put both hands on his shoulders again and looked into his

face. “God has faith in you, my child, and who am I that I should

despair?”

When John Storm returned to the door his mind was in a state of

stupefaction. Many hours passed during which he was only partly

conscious of what was taking place about him. Sometimes he was aware

that certain of the brothers had gathered around, with a tingling,

electrical atmosphere among them, and that they were asking questions

about the escape, and whispering together as if it had been something

courageous and almost commendable, and had set their hearts beating.

Again, sometimes he was aware that big Brother Andrew was sitting by his

side on the form, stroking his arm from time to time, and talking in his

low voice and aimless way about his mother and the last he saw of her.

“She followed me down the street crying,” he said, “and I have often

thought of it since and been tempted to run away.” Also he was aware

that the dog was with him always, licking the backs of his stiff hands

and poking up a cold snout into his downcast face.

All this time he was doing his duties automatically and apparently

without help from his consciousness, opening and closing the door as the

brothers passed in and out on their errands to the dead and dying, and

saying, “Praise be to God!” when a stranger knocked. It may be that his

body was merely answering to the habits of its intellect, and that

his soul, which had sustained a terrible blow, was lying stunned and

swooning within.

When it revived and he began to know and to feel once more, there was no

one with him, for the brothers were asleep in their beds and the dog was

in the courtyard, and the house was very quiet, for it was the middle of

the night. And then it came back to him, like a dream remembered in the

morning, that the Father had asked him to pray for Brother Paul that he

might fail in the errand on which he had sent him out into the world,

and though with his lips he had not promised, yet in his heart he had

undertaken to do so.

And being quite alone now, with no one but God for company, he went down

on his knees in his place by the door and clasped his hands together.

“O God,” he prayed, “have pity on Paul, and on me, and on all of us!

Keep him from all danger and suffering and from the snares and assaults

of the Evil One! Grant that he may never find his sister--or anybody who

knows her--or anybody who can tell him where she is and what has become

of her----”

But having got so far he could get no farther, for suddenly it occurred

to him that this was a prayer which concerned Glory and himself as well.

It was only then that he realized the magnitude and awfulness of the

task he had undertaken. He had undertaken to ask God that Paul might not

find Glory either, and therefore that he on his part might never hear of

her again. When he put it to himself like that, the sweat started from

his forehead and he was transfixed with fear.

He rose from his knees and sat on the form, and for a long hour he

laboured in the thought of a thousand possibilities, telling himself

of the many things which might befall a beautiful girl in a cruel and

wicked city. But then again he thought of Paul and of his former crime

and present temptation, and remembered the shadow that hung over the

Brotherhood.

“O God, help me,” he cried; “strengthen me, support me, guide me!”

He tried to frame another prayer, but the words would not come; he tried

to kneel as before, but his knees would not bend. How could he pray

that Glory also might be lost--that something might have happened to

her--that somewhere and in some way unknown to him----

No, no, a thousand times no! The prayer was impossible. Let come what

would, let the danger to Paul and to the Brotherhood be what it might,

let Satan and all his legions fall on him, yet he could not and would

not utter it.

XIII.

The stars were paling, but the day had not yet dawned, when there came

a knock at the door. John started and listened. After an interval the

knock was repeated. It was a timid, hesitating tap, as if made with the

tips of the fingers low down on the door.

“Praise be to God!” said John, and he drew the slide of the grating. He

had expected to see a face outside, but there was nothing there.

“Who is it?” he asked, and there came no answer.

He took up the lamp that was kept burning in the hall and looked out

through the bars. There was nothing in the darkness but an icy mist,

which appeared to be rising from the ground.

“Only another of my dreams,” he thought, and he laid his hand on the

slide to close it.

Then he heard a sigh that seemed to rise out of the ground, and at the

same moment the dog uttered a deep bay. He laid hold of the door and

pulled it quickly open. At his feet the figure of a man was kneeling,

bent double and huddled up.

“Paul!” he cried in an excited whisper.

Brother Paul raised his head. His face was frightfully changed. It was

gray and wasted. His eyes wandered, his lips trembled, and he looked

like a man who had been flogged.

“Good Lord, what a wreck!” thought John. He helped him to rise and

enter. The poor creature's limbs were stiff with cold, and he stumbled

from weakness as he crossed the threshold.

“But, thank God, you are back and no harm done!” said John. “How anxious

we've been! You must never go out again--never! There, brother, sit

there.”

The wandering eyes looked up with a supplicating expression. “Forgive

me. Brother Storm----”

But John would not listen. “Hush, brother! what have I to forgive? How

cold you are! Your hands are like ice. What can I do? There's no fire in

the house at this time of night--even in the kitchen it will be out now.

But wait, I can rub you with my hands. See, I'm warm and strong. There's

a deal of blood in me yet. That's better, isn't it? Tingling, eh? That's

right--that's good! Now for your feet--your feet will be colder still.”

“No, brother, no. I ought to be kissing the feet of everybody in the

house and asking the prayers of the community, and yet you----”

“Tut! what nonsense! Let me take off this shoe. Dear me, how it sticks!

Why, you've worn it through and through. Look! What a mercy the snow was

hard! If there had been thaw, now! How far you must have walked!”

“Yes, I've wandered a long way, brother.”

“You shall tell me all about it. I want to hear everything--every single

thing.”

“There's nothing to tell. I've failed in my errand--that's all.”

John, who was on his knees, drew back and looked up. “Do you mean,

then---Have you not seen your sister?”

“No, she's gone, and nobody knows anything about her.”

“Well, perhaps it's for the best, brother. God's will be done, you know.

If you had found her--who knows?--you might have been tempted--But tell

me everything.”

“I can not do that, I'm so weak, and it's not worth while.”

“But I want to hear all that happened. See, your feet are all right

now--I've rubbed them warm again. Though I fast so much and look so

thin I've a deal of life in me. And I've been pouring it all into you,

haven't I? That's because I want you to revive and be strong and tell

me everything. Hush! Speak low; don't waken anybody! Did you find the

hospital?”

“Yes.”

“Then Nurse Quayle sees nothing of your sister now? That's the pity of

the life she is leading, poor girl! No friends, no future----”

“It wasn' that, brother.”

“What then?”

“The nurse was not there.”

A silence followed, and then John said in another voice: “I suppose

she was on a holiday. It was very stupid of me; I didn't think of that.

Twice a year a hospital nurse is entitled to a week's holiday, and no

doubt----”

“But she was gone.”

“Gone? You mean left the hospital?”

“Yes.”

“Well,” in a husky voice, “that isn't to be wondered at either.

A high-spirited girl finds it hard to be bound down to rule and

regulation. But the porter--he is an intelligent man--he would tell you

where she had gone to.”

“I asked him; he didn't know. All he could say was that she left the

hospital on the morning of Lord Mayor's Show-day.”

“That would be the 9th of November--the day we took our vows.”

There was another pause; the big dark eyes were wandering vacantly.

“After all, he is only a porter; you asked for the matron, didn't you?”

“Yes; I thought she might know what had become of my sister. But she

didn't. As for Nurse Quayle, she had been dismissed also, and nobody

knew anything about her.”

John had seated himself at Paul's side and the form itself was

quivering.

“Now that's just like her,” he said hoarsely. “That matron was always

a hard woman. And to think that in that great house of love and pity

nobody----”

“I'm forgetting something, brother.”

“What is it?”

“The porter told me that the nurse called for her letters from time to

time. She had been there that night--not half an hour before.”

“Then you followed her, didn't you? You asked which, way she had gone,

and you hurried after her?”

“Yes; but half an hour in London is a week anywhere else. Let anybody

cross the street and she is lost--more lost to sight than a ship in

a storm on the ocean. And then it was New Year's Eve, and the

thoroughfares were crowded, and thousands of women were coming and

going--and--what could I do?” he said helplessly.

John answered scornfully: “What could you do? Do you ask me what you

could do?”

“What would you have done?”

“I should have tramped every street in London and looked into the face

of every woman I met until I had found her. I should have worn my shoes

to the welt and my skin to the bone before I should have come crawling

home like a snail with my shell broken over my head!

“Don't be hard on me, brother, least of all now, when I have come home

like a snail, as you say, with my shell broken. I was very tired and ill

and did all I could. If I had been strong like you and brave-hearted I

might have struggled longer. Bid I \_did\_ tramp the streets and look into

the women's faces. She must have been among them, if she's living the

life you speak of; but God would not let me find her. Why was it that

my search was fruitless? Perhaps there was evil in my heart at first--I

don't mind telling you that now--but I swear to you by Him who died for

us that at last I only wanted to find my sister that I might save her.

But I am such a helpless creature, and----”

John put his arm about Paul's shoulders.

“Forgive me, brother. I was mad to talk to you like that--I who sent

you out on that cruel night and staid at home myself. You did what you

could----”

“You think that--really?”

“Yes, only at the moment it seemed as if we had changed places somehow,

and it was I who had lost a sister and been out to find her, and

given up the search too soon, and come home empty and useless and

broken-spirited, and----”

Paul was looking up at him with a face full of astonishment.

“Do you really think I did all I could to find her--the nurse, I mean?”

But John had turned his own face away, and there was no answer. Paul

tried to say something, but he could not find the words. At last in a

choked voice he murmured: “We must keep close together, brother; we are

in the same boat now.”

And feeling for John's hand, he took it and held it, and they sat for

some minutes with bowed heads, as if a ghost were going by.

“There's nothing but prayer and penance and fasting left to us, is

there?”

Still John made no reply, and the broken creature began to comfort him.

“We have peace here at all events, and you wouldn't, think what

temptations come to you in the world when you've lost somebody, and

there seems to be nothing left to live for. Shall I tell you what I

did? It was in the early morning and I was standing in a doorway in

Piccadilly. The cabs and the crowds were gone, and only the nightmen

were there swilling up the dirt of the pavements with their hose-pipes

and water. 'My poor girl is lost,' I thought, 'We shall never see one

another again. This wicked city has ruined her, and our mother, who was

so holy, was fond of her when she was a little child.' And then my heart

seemed to freeze up within me... and I did it. You'll think I was mad--I

went to the police station and told them I had committed a crime. Yes,

indeed, I accused myself of murder, and began to give particulars. It

was only when they noticed my habit that I remembered the Father, and

then I refused to answer any more questions. They put me in a cell, and

that was where I spent the night, and next morning I denied everything,

and they let me go.”

Then, dropping his voice to a hoarse whisper, he said: “That wasn't what

brought me back, though. It was the vow. You can't think what a thing

the vow is until you've broken it. It's like a hot iron searing your

very soul, and if you were dying and at the farthest ends of the earth,

and you had to crawl on your hands and knees, you would come back----”

He would have said more, but an attack of coughing silenced him, and

when it was over there was a sound of some one moving in the house.

“What is that?”

“It is the Father,” said John. “Our voices have wakened him.”

Paul struggled to his feet.

“It's only a life of penance and suffering you've come back to, my poor

lad.”

“That's nothing--nothing at all--But are you sure you think I did

everything?”

“You did what you could. Are you going somewhere?”

“Yes, to the Father.”

“God bless you, my lad!”

“And God bless you too, brother!”

Half an hour later, by the order of the Superior, John Storm, with the

help of Brother Andrew and the Father Minister, carried Brother Paul to

his cell. The bell had been rung for Lauds, and going up the stairs they

passed the brothers coming down to service. News of Paul's return had

gone through the house like a cutting wind, and certain of the brothers

who had gathered in groups on the landings were whispering together, as

if the coming back had been a shameful thing which cast discredit on all

of them. It wasn't love of rule that had brought the man home again, but

broken health and the want of a bed to die upon! Thus they talked under

their breath, unconscious of the secret operation of their own hearts.

In a monastery, as elsewhere, failure is the worst disgrace.

John Storm returned to the hall with a firm step and eyes full of

resolution. Hardly answering the brothers, who plied him with questions,

he pushed through them with long strides, and, taking the key of the

outer gate from the place in the alcove where he had left it, he turned

toward the Father's room.

The day had dawned, and through the darkness which was lifting in the

little room he could see the Father rising from his knees.

“Father!” he cried in an excited voice, and his words, like his breath,

came in gusts.

“What is it, my son?”

“Take this key back again. The world is calling me, and I can not trust

myself at the door any longer. Put me under the rule of silence and

solitude, and shut me up in a cell, or I shall break my obedience and

run away as sure as heaven is over us!”

XIV.

Glory awoke on New Year's morning with a little hard lump at her heart,

and thought: “How foolish! Am I to give up all my cherished dreams

because one man is a scoundrel?”

The struggle might be bitter, but she would not give in. London was the

mother of genius. If she destroyed she created also. It was only the

weak and the worthless she cast away. The strong she made stronger, the

great she made greater. “O God, give me the life I love!” she thought;

“give me a chance; only let me begin--no matter how, no matter where!”

She remembered her impulse of the night before to follow Brother Paul,

and the little hard lump at her heart grew bitter. John Storm had gone

from her, forgotten her, left her to take care of herself. Very well,

so be it! What was the use of thinking? “I hate to be sentimental,” she

thought.

If Aggie called on Sunday night she would go with her, no matter if it

was beginning at the bottom. Others had begun there, and what right had

she to expect to begin anywhere else? For the future she would take the

world on its own terms and force it to give way. She would conquer this

great cruel London, and yet remain a good girl in spite of all.

Such was the mood in which she came down to breakfast, and the first

thing that met her eyes was a letter from home. At that her face burned

for a moment and her breath came in gusts, but she put the letter into

her pocket unopened and tossed her head a little and laughed. “I hate to

be so sensitive,” she thought, and then she began to tell Mrs. Jupe what

she intended to do.

“The clubs!” cried Mrs. Jupe. “I thought you didn't tyke to the shop

because you fancied yerself above present company. But the foreign

clubs! My gracious!”

The hissing of Mrs. Jupe's taunting voice followed her about all that

day, and late at night, when they were going to bed and the streets were

quiet, and there was only the jingle of a passing hansom or a drunken

shout or the screech of a concertina, she could hear it again from the

other side of the plaster partition, interrupted occasionally by the

sound of Mr. Jupe's attempts to excuse and apologize for her. No matter!

Anything to escape from the atmosphere of that woman's house, to be free

of her and quit of her forever!

Toward eight o'clock on Sunday evening she went up to her bedroom to put

on her hat and ulster, and being alone there, and waiting for Aggie, she

could not help but open her letter from home.

“Sunday next is your birthday, my dear one,” wrote the parson, “so we

send you our love and greetings. This being the first of your twenty-one

that you have spent from home, I will be thinking of you all the day

through, and when night comes, and I smoke a pipe by the study fire, I

know I shall be leaving the blind up that I may see the evening star and

remember the happy birthdays long ago, when somebody, who was so petted

and spoiled, used to say she had just come down from it, having dressed

herself in some strange and grand disguises, and told us she was

Phonodoree the fairy. You will be better employed than that, Glory, and

as long as my dear one is well and happy and prosperous in the great

city where she so loves to be----”

The candle was shaking in Glory's hands, and the little half-lit bedroom

seemed to be blinking in and out.

Aunt Anna had added a postscript: “Glad to hear you are enjoying

yourself in London, but rather alarmed at your frequent mention of

theatres. Take care you don't go too often, child, and mind you send us

the name of the vicar of the parish you are living in, for I certainly

think grandfather ought to write to him.”

To this again there was a footnote by Aunt Rachel: “You say nothing of

Mr. Drake nowadays. Is he one of Mrs. Jupe's visitors? And is it he who

takes you to theatres?”

Then there was a New Year's card enclosed, having a picture of an

Eastern shepherd at the head of his flock of sheep and bearing the

inscription, “Follow in his footsteps.”

But the hissing sound of Mrs. Jupe's voice came up from below, and

Glory's tears were dried in an instant. On going downstairs, she found

Aggie in her mock sealskin and big black feathers sitting in the parlour

at the back of the shop, and Mrs. Jupe talking to her in whispers, with

an appearance of knowledge and familiarity. She caught the confused look

of the one and the stealthy glances of the other, and the hard lump at

her heart grew harder.

“Come on,” said Glory, and a few minutes afterward the girls were

walking toward Soho. The little chapels in the quieter streets were

dropping out their driblets of people and the lights in the church

windows were being extinguished one by one. Aggie had recovered her

composure, and was talking of Charlie as she skipped along with a rapid

step, swinging her stage-box by her side. Charlie was certain to be at

one of the clubs, and he would be sure to see them home. He wasn't out

of his time yet, and that was why her father wouldn't allow him about.

But he was in an office at a foundry, and his people lived in a house,

and perhaps one of these days----

“Did you say that some of the people who are on the stage now began at

the clubs?” said Glory.

“Plenty, my dear. There's Betty Bellman for one. She was at a club in

Old Compton Street when Mr. Sefton found her out.”

Aggie had to “work a turn” at each of three clubs that night, and the

girls were now at the door of the first of them. It stood at the corner

of a reputable square, and was like any ordinary house on the outside.

But people were coming and going constantly, and the doorkeeper was kept

opening and closing the door. In the middle of the hall a clerk stood

at a desk, having a great book in front of him, and making a show of

challenging everybody as he entered. He recognised Aggie as an artiste,

but passed Glory also on the payment of twopence and the signing of her

name in the book.

The dining-room of the house had been converted into a bar, with counter

and stillage, and after the girls had crushed through the crowds that

stood there they came into a large and shabby chamber, which had the

appearance of having been built over the space which had once been the

backyard. This room had neither windows nor skylights; its walls were

decorated with portraits of Garibaldi and Victor Emanuel in faded

colours, and there was a stage and proscenium at its farther end.

It was an Italian club that met there on Sunday nights, and some two or

three hundred hairdressers and restaurant-keepers of swarthy complexion

sat in groups at little round tables with their wives and sweethearts

(chiefly English women), smoking and drinking and laughing at the

performance on the stage.

Aggie went down to her dressing-room under the floor, and Glory sat at a

table with a yellow-haired lady and a dark-eyed man. A negro without

the burnt cork was twanging a banjo and cracking the jokes of the

corner-man.

“That's my style--a merry touch-and-go,” said the lady. And then

glancing at Glory, “Singing to-night, my dear?”

Glory shook her head.

“Thort you might be a pro' p'rhaps. Use ter be myself when I was in the

bally at the Lane. Married now, my dear; but I likes to come of a Sunday

night when the kids is got to bed.”

Then Aggie danced a skirt dance, and there were shouts of applause for

her, and she came back and danced again. When she reappeared in jacket

and hat, and with her stage-box in her hand, the girls crushed their way

out. Going through the bar they were invited to drink by several of the

men who were standing there, but they got into the streets at last.

“They're rather messy, those bars,” said Aggie; “but managers like you

to come round and tyke something after you've done your turn--if it's

only a cup of cawfy.”

“Do you like this life?” said Glory, taking a long breath.

“Yes, awfully!” said Aggie.

Their next visit was to a Swiss club, which did not greatly differ from

the Italian one, except that the hall was more shabby, and that the

audience consisted of French and Swiss waiters and skittish young

English milliners. The girls had taken their hats and cloaks off and sat

dressed like dolls in white muslin with long streamers of bright ribbon.

A gentleman sang the “Postman's Knock,” with the character accompaniment

of a pot hat and a black-edged envelope, a lady sang “Maud” in silk

tights and a cloak, Aggie danced her skirt dance, and then the floor was

cleared for a ball.

“They're going to dance the Swiss dance,” said Aggie, “and the M. C.

wants me to tyke a place; but I hate these fellows to be hugging me.

Will you be my partner, dear?”

“Well--just for a minute or two,” said Glory, with nervous gaiety. And

then the dance began.

It proved to be a musical version of odd man out, and Glory soon found

herself being snapped up by other partners and addressed familiarly by

the waiters and their women. She could feel the moisture of their hands

and smell the oil of their hair, and a feeling like a spasm of physical

pain came over her.

“Let us go,” she whispered.

“Yes, it's getting lyte,” said Aggie, and they crushed through the

crowded bar and out into the street.

The twanging of the fiddles, the thud of the dancing, and the peals of

coarse laughter followed them from the stifling atmosphere within, and

Glory felt sick and faint.

“Do you say that managers of good places call at these clubs sometimes?”

“Often,” said Aggie, and she hummed a music-hall tune as she skipped and

tripped along.

The streets, which had been dark and quiet when they arrived in Soho,

were now ablaze with lights in every window, and noisy with people on

every pavement. The last club they had to visit was a German one, and

as they came near it they saw that a man was standing at the door

bareheaded and looking out for somebody.

“It's Charlie,” said Aggie with a little jump of joy. But when they came

up to him a scowl darkened his dark face, and he said:

“Lyte as usyal! Two of the bloomin' turns not come, and me looking up

and dahn the bloomin' street for you every minute and more!”

The girl's eyes blinked as if he had struck her, but she only tossed her

head and stiffened her under lip, and said: “Jawing again, are ye? I'd

chuck it for once, Charlie, if it was only for sake of company.”

With that she disappeared to the dressing-room, and Charlie took charge

of Glory, crushed a way for her through the refreshment room, offered

her a “glaws of somethink,” and with an obvious pride of possession

introduced her to admiring acquaintances as “a friend o' mine.” “Like

yer style, Charlie,” said one of them. “Oh, yus! Dare say!” said

Charlie.

The proscenium was surmounted by the German and English flags

intertwined, the walls were adorned with oleograph portraits of the

Kaiser, his father and grandfather, Bismarck and Von Moltke, and the

audience consisted largely of lively young German Jews and Jewesses in

evening dress, some Polish Jews, and a sprinkling of other foreigners.

During Aggie's turn Glory was conscious that two strangers out of

another world altogether had entered the club and were standing at the

back.

“Toffs,” said Charlie, looking at them over her shoulder, and then,

answering to himself the meaning of their looks, “No, my luds! 'Tain't

the first we've seen of sech!”

Then Aggie came up with an oily person in a flowered waistcoat and said,

“This is my friend, guv'nor, and she wouldn't mind doing a turn if you

asked her.”

“If de miss vill oblige,” began the oily one, and then the blood rushed

to Glory's face, and before she knew what else had happened, her hat

and ulster were in Aggie's hands and she was walking up the steps to the

stage.

There was some applause when she went on, but she was in a dazed

condition and it all seemed to be taking place a hundred miles away.

She heard her own voice saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, with your kind

permission I will endeavour to give you an imitation----” and something

more. Down to that moment her breath had been coming and going in hot

gasps, and she had felt a dryness in her throat; but every symptom

of nervousness suddenly disappeared, and she threw up her head like a

charger in battle.

Then she sang. It was only a common street song, and everybody had heard

it a thousand times. She sang “And her golden hair was hanging down her

back” after the manner of a line of factory girls going home from work

at night. Arm-in-arm, decked in their Vandyke hats, slashed with red

ribbons and crowned with ostrich feathers, with their free step, their

shrill voices--they were there before everybody's eyes, everybody could

see them, everybody could recognise them, and before the end of the

first verse there were shouts and squeals of laughter.

Glory felt dizzy yet self-possessed; she gave a little audible laugh

while she stood bowing between the verses. In a few minutes the song was

finished and the people were stamping, whistling, uttering screeching

cat-calls, and shouting “Brayvo!” But Glory was sitting at the foot of

the stage by this time with a face contorted as in physical pain. After

the first thrill of success the shame of it all came over her and she

saw how low she had fallen, and felt horrified and afraid. The clamour,

the clapping of hands, the vulgar faces, the vulgar laughter, the vulgar

song, Sunday night, her own birthday! It all passed before her like

the incidents in some nightmare, and at the back of it came other

memories--Glenfaba, the sweet and simple household, the old parson

smoking by the study fire and looking up at the evening star, and then

John Storm and the church chimes at Bishopsgate! One moment she sat

there with her burning face, staring helplessly before her, while people

crowded round to shake hands with her and cried into her ears above the

deafening tumult, “You'll have to tyke another turn, dear”; and then she

burst into passionate weeping.

“Stand avay! De lady's not fit to sing again,” said some one, and she

opened her eyes.

It was one of the two gentlemen who had been standing at the back.

“Ach Gott! Is it you? Don't you know me, nurse?”

It was Mr. Koenig, the organist.

“My gracious! Vot are you doing here, my child? Two monts ago I haf ask

for you at de hospital, and haf write to de matron, but you vere gone.

Since den I haf look for you all over London. Vhere do you lif?”

Glory told him, and he wrote down the address.

“Ugh! A genius, and lif in a tobacco shop! My vife vill call on you and

fetch you avay. She is a goot woman, and vhatever she tell you to do

you must do it; but not musical and clever same like as you. Bless mine

soul! Singing in a Sunday club! Do you know, my child, you haf a voice,

and talents, great talents! Vants training--yes. But vhat vould you haf?

Here am I, Carl Koenig! I speak ver' bad de Englisch, but I know ver'

goot to teach music. I vill teach you same like I teach oder ladies who

pay me many dollare. Do you know vhat I am?”

Yes, she knew what he was--he was the organist at All Saints',

Belgravia.

“Pooh! I am a composer as veil. I write songs, and all your countrymen

and countryvomen sing dem. I haf a choral company, too, and it is

for dat I vant you. I go to de first houses in de land, de lords,

de ministers, de princes. You shall come vith me. Your voice is

soprano--no, mezzo-soprano--and it vill grow. I vill pitch it, and vhen

it is ready I vill bring you out. But now get away from dis place and

naivare come back, or I vill be more angry as before.”

Then Glory rose, and he led her to the door. Her heart felt big and her

eyes were glistening. Aggie was in the refreshment-room. Having finished

for the night, the girl had resumed her outdoor costume without removing

her make-up, and was laughing merrily among a group of men and playing

them off against Charlie, who was still in the sulks and drinking at

the bar. When Glory appeared, Aggie fidgeted with her glove and said,

“Aren't you going to see us home, Charlie?”

“No,” said Charlie.

“Where are you going to?”

“Nowhere as you can come.”

Aggie's eyes watered, and she wrenched a button off, but she only

laughed and answered, “Don't think as we're throwing ourselves at \_your\_

head, my man! We only wanted to \_know\_. Ta-ta!”

It was now midnight, and the streets were thin of people, but sounds of

music and dancing came from nearly every open window and door.

Aggie was crying. “That's the worst of the clubs,” she said, “they lead

'em to the gambling hells. And then a young man always knows when he can

tyke advantage.”

As they returned past the Swiss club somebody who was being thrown out

into the street was shouting in a gurgling voice, “Let go o' my throat

or I'll corpse ye!” And farther on two or three girls in their teens,

with their arms about the necks of twice as many men, were reeling along

the pavement and singing in a tuneless wail.

XV.

Toward the middle of Lent the Society of the Holy Gethsemane was visited

by its ecclesiastical Visitor. This was the Bishop of the diocese, a

liberal-minded man and not a very rigid ecclesiastic, abrupt, brusque,

businesslike, and a good administrator. When the brothers had gathered

in the community room, he took from the Superior the leathern-bound

volume containing the rule of the Brotherhood and read aloud the text of

it.

“And now, gentlemen,” he said, “whether I approve of your rule or not

is a matter with which we have no concern at present. My sole duty is

to see that it is lawfully administered. Are you satisfied with the

administration of it and willing to remain under its control?”

There was only one response from the brothers--they were entirely

satisfied.

The Bishop rose with a smile and bowed to the brothers, and they began

to leave the room.

“There are two of my people whom you have not yet seen,” said the

Father.

“Where are they?”

“In their cells.”

“Why in their cells?”

“One of them is ill; the other is under the rule of silence and

solitude.”

“Let us visit them,” said the Bishop, and they began to ascend the

stairs.

“I may not agree with your theory of the religious life, Father, but

when I see your people giving up the world and its comforts, its joys

and possessions, its ties of blood and affection----”

They had reached the topmost story, and the Father had paused to recover

breath. “This cell to the right,” said he, “is occupied by a lay brother

who was tempted by the Evil One to a grievous act of disobedience, and

the wrath of God has fallen on him. But Satan has overreached himself

for once, and by that very act grace has triumphed. Not a member of our

community rejoices more in the blessed sacrament, and when I place the

body of our Lord----”

“May we go in to him?”

“Certainly; he is dying of lung disease, but you shall see with what

patience he possesses his soul.”

Brother Paul was sitting before a small fire in an arm-chair padded

with pillows, holding in his dried-up hands a heavy crucifix which was

suspended from his heck.

“How lightsome and cosy we are up here!” said the Bishop. “A long way

up, certainly, but no doubt you get everything you require.”

“Everything,” said Paul.

“I dare say the brothers are very good to you--they usually are so to

the weak and ailing in a monastery.”

“Too good, my lord.”

“Of course you see a doctor occasionally?”

“Three times a week, and if he would only let me escape from an evil and

troublesome world----”

“Hush! It's not right to talk like that, my son. Whatever happens, it is

our duty to live, you know.”

“I've lost all there was to live for, and besides----”

“Then there is nothing you wish for?” said the Bishop.

“Nothing but death,” said Paul, and lifting the crucifix he carried it

to his lips.

“Thank God we are born to die!” said the Bishop, and they stepped back

to the corridor and closed the door.

“This next cell,” said the Father, “is occupied by such a one as you

were thinking of--one who was born to possess the world and to achieve

its sounding triumphs, but----”

“Has he given it up entirely?”

“Entirely.”

“Is he young?”

“Quite young, and he has left the world, not as Augustine did, after

learning by bitter experience the deceitfulness of sin----”

“Then why is he here?”

“He can not trust himself yet. He feels the inward strivings and

struggles of our rebellious nature and----”

“Then his solitude and silence are voluntary?”

“Now they are. See,” said the Father, and stooping to the floor he

picked up a key that lay at his feet.

“What does that mean?”

“He locks himself in and pushes the key under the door.”

When they entered the cell John Storm was standing by the window in a

stream of morning sunlight, looking out on the world below with fixed

and yearning eyes.

“This is our Visitor,” said the Father. “The rule of silence is relaxed

in his case.”

“Have I not seen you before?” said the Bishop.

“I think not, Father,” said John.

“What is your name, and where did you live before you came here?”

John told him.

“Then I have both seen and heard you. But I perceive that the world has

gone on a little since you left it--your canon is an archdeacon now, and

one of the chaplains to the Queen as well. How long have you been in the

Brotherhood?”

“Since the 14th of August.”

“And how long have you kept your cell?”

“Since the octave of Epiphany.”

“But this is Lent--rather a long penance, Father.”

“I have often urged our dear brother----” began the Father.

“You carry your fastings and prayers too far, Mr. Storm,” said the

Bishop. He was picking up one by one some black-letter books that were

lying on the table and on the bed. “I know that divines in all ages tell

us that the body is evil, and that its desires and appetites must be

eradicated. But they also teach us that the perfect Christian character

is the blending of the two lives, the life of Nature and the life of

grace. Don't despise your humanity, my son. Your Master did not despise

it. He came down from heaven that he might live and work among the

sinful brotherhood of man. And don't pray for death, or fast as if you

wished for it. You would have no right to do that even if you were

like your poor neighbour next door, whom Death smiles on and beckons to

repose. But you are young and you are strong. Who knows what good work

your heavenly Father keeps waiting for you yet?”

John had returned to the window and was looking out with vacant eyes.

“But all this is beside my present business,” said the Bishop. “There is

nothing you wish to complain of?”

“Nothing whatever.”

“You are content to live in this house, under the laws and statutes of

this society and in voluntary obedience to its Superior?”

“Yes.”

“That is enough.”

The Bishop was leaving the cell, when his eye was arrested by some

writing in pencil on the wall. It ran, “9th of November--Lord Mayor's

Day”; and under it were short lines such as a prisoner makes when he

keeps a reckoning.

“What is the meaning of this date?” said the Bishop.

John was silent, but the Father answered with a smile: “That is the date

of his vow, my lord. It is part of the discipline of his life of grace

to keep count of the days of his novitiate, so eager is he for the time

when he may dedicate his whole life to God.”

Back at the head of the stairs the Father paused again and said,

“Listen!”

There was the sound as of a trembling hand turning the key in the lock

of the door they had shut behind them, and at the next moment the key

itself came out of the aperture under it.

When the door closed on the Bishop and John Storm was alone in his cell,

one idea was left with him--the idea of work. He had tried everything

else, and everything had failed.

He had tried solitude. On asking to be shut up in a cell, he had said

to himself: “The thought of Glory is a temptation of my unquickened and

unspiritual nature. It has already betrayed me into an act of cowardice

and inhumanity, and it will drive me out into the world and fling me

back again, as it drove out and flung back Brother Paul.” But the result

of his solitude was specious and deceitful. As pictures seem to float

before the eyes after the eyelids are closed, so his past life, now

that it was over, seemed to rise up before him with awful distinctness.

Sitting alone in his cell, every event of his life with Glory passed

before him in review, and harassed him with pitiless condemnation. Why

had he failed to realize the essential difference of temperament between

himself and that joyous creature? Why had he hesitated to gratify her

natural and innocent love of mere life? Why had he done this? Why had he

not done that? If Glory were lost, if the wicked and merciless world had

betrayed her, the fault was his, and God would surely punish him. Thus

did solitude enervate his soul by frightening it, and the temptation he

had hoped to vanquish became the more strong and tyrannical.

He had tried reading. The Fathers told him that God allowed ascetics to

keep the keys of their nature in their own hands; that they had only to

think of woman as more bitter than death, and of her beauty as a cause

of perdition, and that if any woman's face tormented them they were

to picture it to the eye of the mind as old and wrinkled, defaced by

disease, and even the prey of the worm. He tried to think of Glory as

the Fathers directed, but when darkness fell and he lay on his bed, with

the first dream of the night the strong powers of Nature that had no

mind to surrender swept down the pitiful bulwarks of religion, and

Glory was smiling upon him in her youth, her beauty, her sweetness, her

humour, and all the grace of her countless gifts.

He had tried fasting. Three times a day Brother Andrew brought him his

food, and twice a day, when the lay brother had left him, he opened the

window and spread the food on the sill for the birds to take. But the

results of his fasting were the reverse of his expectations. At one

moment he was uplifted by strong emotions, at the next moment he was in

collapse. Visions began to pass before him. His father's face tormented

him constantly, and sometimes he was conscious of the face of his

mother, though he had never known her. But above all and through all

there came the face of Glory. Fasting had only extended his dreams about

her. He was dreaming both by day and by night now, and Glory was with

him always.

He had tried prayer. Hitherto he had said his Offices regularly, but

now he would say special prayers as well. To get the victory over his

lawless and rebellious nature he would turn his eyes to the mother of

the Lord. But when he tried to fix his mind on Mary there was nothing

to answer to it. All was shadowy and impalpable. There was only a vague,

empty cloud before his eyes, until suddenly a luminous face glided into

the vacant place, and it was full of tenderness, of sweetness, of charm,

of pity and womanly love--but it was the face of Glory.

Despair laid hold of him. His attempts to overcome Nature were clearly

rejected by the Almighty. Winter passed with its foggy days. The Father

wished him to return to the ordinary life of the community, yet he

begged to be allowed to remain.

But the spring came and diffused its joy throughout all Nature. He

listened to the leaves, he watched the birds threading their way in the

clear air, he caught glimpses of the yellow flowers, and strained his

eyes for the green country beyond. The young birds began to take wing,

and one little sparrow came hopping into his room as often as he opened

his window in the morning and played about his feet like a mouse, and

then was gone to the mother bird that called to it from the tree.

Little by little hope grew to impatience, and impatience rose to fever

heat; but he remembered his vow, and, to put himself out of temptation,

he locked the door of his cell and pushed the key through the aperture

under it. But he could not lock the door of his soul, and his old

trouble came up again with the throb of a stronger and fresher life.

Every morning when he awoke he thought of Glory. Where was she now? What

had become of her by this time? He wrote on the wall the date of

her disappearance from the hospital--“9th of November; Lord Mayor's

Day”--and tried to keep pace in his mind with the chances of her fate.

“I am guilty of a folly,” he thought. The pride of his reason revolted

against what he was doing. Nevertheless, he knew full well it would be

the same to-morrow, and the next day, and the next year, for his human

passions would not yield, and his vow still clutched him as with fangs.

He was standing one morning by the window looking through an opening

between high buildings to the river, with its hay barges gliding down

the glistening water-way, and its little steamers with their spirals of

smoke ascending, when everything in the world began in a moment to bear

another moral interpretation. The lesson of life was work. Man could not

exist without it. If he departed from that condition, no matter how much

he fasted and meditated and prayed, he was useless and miserable and

depraved.

Then the lock turned in the door of his cell and the Father and the

Bishop entered. When they were gone he felt suffocated by their praises

of his piety, and asked himself, “What am I doing here?” He was a

hypocrite. Ten thousand other men whom the Church called saints had been

hypocrites before him, and as they paced their cloisters they had asked

themselves the same question. But the mighty hand of the Church was over

him still, and with trembling fingers he turned the key again and pushed

it under the door. Then he knew that he was a coward also, and that

religion had deprived him of his will, of his manhood, and enervated his

soul itself.

Brother Paul was moving about in the adjoining cell. The lay brother had

become very weak; his step was slow, his feet dragged along the floor;

his breath was audible and sometimes his cough was long and raucous.

John had heard these sounds every day and had tried not to listen, but

now he strained his ears to hear. A new thought had come to him: he

would ask to be allowed to nurse Brother Paul; that should be his work,

for work alone could save him.

Next morning he leaped up from sleep at the first syllable of

“Benedicamus Domino,” and cried, “Father!” But when the door opened in

answer to his call it was the Father Minister who entered. The Superior

had gone to give a Retreat to a sisterhood in York, and would be absent

until the end of Lent. John looked at the hard face of the deputy, the

very mirror of its closed and frozen soul, and he could say nothing.

“Is it anything that I can do for you?” said the Father Minister.

“No--that is to say--no, no,” said John.

When he opened his window that day he could hear the Lenten services in

the church. The prayers, the responses, the psalms, and the hymns woke

to fresh life the memory of things long past, and for the first time

he became oppressed with a great loneliness. The near neighbourhood of

Brother Paul intensified that loneliness, and at length he asked for an

indulgence and spoke to the Father Minister again.

“Brother Paul is ill; let me attend to him,” he said.

The Father Minister shook his head. “The brother gets all he wants. He

does not wish for constant attendance.”

“But he is a dying man, and somebody should be with him always.”

“The doctor says nothing can be done for him. He may live months. But if

he is dying, let us leave him to meditate on the happiness and glory of

another world.”

John made no further struggle. Another door had closed on him. But

it was not necessary to go to Brother Paul that he might be with him

always. The spiritual eye could see everything. Listening to the sounds

in the adjoining cell, it was the same at length as if the wall between

them had fallen down and the two rooms were one. Whatever Brother Paul

did John seemed to see, whatever he said in his hours of pain John

seemed to hear, and when he lifted his scuttle of coal from the place

at the door where the lay brother left it, John's hand seemed to bear up

the weight.

It was a poor, pathetic folly, but it brought the comfort of company,

and John thought with a pang of the time when he had wished to be

separated from Paul, and had all but asked for a cell elsewhere. Paul

had a fire, and John could hear him build and light and stir it; and

sometimes when this was done he could sit down himself before his

own empty grate on his own side of the wall and fancy they were good

comrades sitting side by side.

As the day passed he thought that Brother Paul on his part also was

touched by the same sense of company. His silence at certain moments,

his half-articulate salutations, his repetition of the sounds that John

himself made, seemed to be the dumb expression of a sense that, in spite

of the wall that divided them, and the rule of silence and solitude that

separated them on John's side, they were, nevertheless, together.

Brother Paul's cough grew rapidly worse, and at last it burst into a fit

so long and violent as to seem as if it would never end. John held his

breath and listened. “He'll suffocate,” he thought; “he'll never live

through it!” But the spasm passed, and there was a prolonged hush, a

dead stillness, that was not broken by so much as the sound of a breath.

Was he gone? By a sudden impulse, in the agony of his suspense, John

stretched out his hand and knocked three times on the wall.

There was a short silence, and then faintly, slowly, and irregularly

three other knocks came back to him.

Paul had understood, and John shouted in his joy. But even on top of his

relief came his religious fears. Had he broken the rule of silence? Were

they guilty of a sin?

Nevertheless, for many days thereafter, though they knew it was a fault,

in this vague and dumb and feeble fashion they communicated constantly.

On going to bed they rapped “Good-night”: on rising for the day they

rapped “Good-morning.” They rapped when the bell rang for midday

service, and again when the singing came up through the courtyard.

And sometimes they rapped from sympathy and sometimes from pity, and

sometimes from mere human loneliness and the love of company.

Thus did these exiles from life, struggling to live under the eye of

God in obedience to their earthly vow, try to cheer their crushed and

fettered souls, and to comfort each other like imprisoned children.

XVI.

“The Priory, St. John's Wood, London.

“Behold, all men and women at Glenfaba, I have made one further change

in my rôle of female Wandering Jew! You have to think of Glory now,

dear people, in a nice house in St. John's Wood, though there is no wood

anywhere visible except the park, where they keep all the wild beasts in

London--all that go on four legs, you know. The master of the mansion is

Mr. Carl Koenig, a dear old hippopotamus who is five-feet-nothing in his

boots, and has piercing black eyes and an electroplated mustache. He

is a sort of an English-German-Dutch-Polish musician. When he talks of

himself as an organist he is always a little John Bull, being F. R. C.

O. and lots of things besides; when he speaks of 'Vaterland' he is a

German; when he mentions the sea he is a Dutchman; and when he is in

good spirits (or they are in him) he sings 'Poland is not lost forever!'

all over the house until you sometimes wish it were.

“His wife is an Englishwoman, about forty or more, with big, moist,

doggy eyes that give you an idea of slave-humility, and an unappreciated

and undeveloped soul. There never were two married folk less alike, she

being one of those silent creatures who come into a room and sit and

listen and never speak, except to give instructions to the maids, while

he is always cackling like an old hen who can never lay an egg without

letting the whole world know all about it. They have two female

servants--both beautiful Cockneys--besides a boy in the garden, and

a parrot that holds forth all over the place; and their house is the

rendezvous of all kinds and conditions of great people, for Mr. Koenig

himself is a sort of Gideon's lamp among 'pros' of nearly every order.

“And now you want to know how I come to be here. You are to learn then

that Mr. Koenig happened to be one of my patients in the hospital, he

having gone there for a slight operation, and I having helped to nurse

him through what he calls his 'operatic cure.' In the course of that

ordeal he had music of a less excruciating kind sometimes, it seems, and

after his return home he searched for me all over London on account of

my voice, and finding me unexpectedly at last he sent his wife to Mrs.

Jupe's to fetch me, and--and here I am in a dainty little dimity

room, whose walls are covered with portraits of well-known singers,

violinists, pianists, and composers, with their affectionate

inscriptions underneath.

“But you want to learn why I am here. Well, you must know that Mr.

Koenig (although a foreign musician) is organist of All Saints',

Belgravia, where they sing a solo anthem at nearly every Sunday morning

service; and having had various disappointments at the hands of vocal

soloists from the Opera, whose 'professional engagements suddenly

intervened,' he conceived the audacious idea of 'intervening' a woman to

do their duty permanently. So this is my position in the church at which

John Storm used to be curate, and once a week I pipe that his old enemy

the canon may play. But as that good man is of St. Paul's opinion about

women holding their tongues in the synagogue, and is blest with just

enough ear to know a contralto from a corn-crake, I have to be hidden

away behind a screen in order that his reverence may have all the fun to

himself of believing me to be a boy.

“So you see, my dearies, you needn't be anxious about me, 'at all at

all', seeing that I am living in this atmosphere of art and the odour of

sanctity, and that I have kept only one tiny little thing back, and I am

going to tell you that now. You were afraid that I might go too often to

the theatre, Aunt Anna. Never mind, auntie, I shall not be going so

very often now, and in proof thereof permit me to introduce myself in

my future style and character--Miss Glory Quayle, the eminent social

entertainer! You don't know what that is, dear people? It is quite

simple and innocent, nevertheless. I am to go to the houses of smart

people when they give their grand parties and sing and recite, and so

forth. Nothing wrong, you see--only what I used to do at Glenfaba.

“You must know that, just as in the country the men go to the smithy

when they have nothing more pressing on hand than to settle the affairs

of the universe, and the women to the mangle-house when they have to

mangle other things besides clothes, so in the towns the poor rich

people have their own particular diversion, which they call their 'At

Homes.' Mr. Drake used to tell me they were terrible Tower-of-Babel

concerns, at which everybody talked at once, and all the tongues in the

place went 'click-clack, world without end.' But they must be perfectly

charming for all that; and when I think of the dresses and the diamonds

and the titles as long as your breath--oh, dear! oh, dear!

“I shall see it all soon, I suppose, for to supply the place of the

hammer and the anvil the smart folks always add musical accompaniment to

the confusion of tongues, and Mr. Koenig, who has a choral company, goes

to the cream of the cream of such gatherings, and sings and plays from

Grieg and Schumann, and Liszt and Wagner, and Chopin and Paderewski, and

the place intended for me in this grand organization would appear to be

that of jester to my lords and ladies. '\_Ach Gott!\_' says Mr. Koenig,

who 'speaks ver' bad de Englisch,' 'your great people vant de last new

ting. One lady she say to me, “Dear Mr. Koenig, I tink I shall not ask

you dis season. I hear you everyvheres I go to, and I get so tired of

peoples.” But vhen I takes anoder wis me I am a new beesness. You shall

sing and recite your leetle funny tings. Your great people tink dey loof

music, but dey loof better to laugh. “For mercy's sake make dem laugh,

Mr. Koenig”--dat's vhat a great man say to me. But, my gootness, how can

I? I am a musician, I am a composer, I am an arteeste!'

“For this high and noble office I have been going through a purgatory

of preparation in which I have sometimes hardly known whether I was a

hurdy-gurdy or an explosion of cats, and the future female jester has

even been known to lie down on the floor and cry in her dumps of despair

or some such devilry. However, Mr. Koenig begins to believe that I am

passable, and my first appearance is to be made immediately after Lent,

at the house of the Home Secretary, where it is not improbable, dear

Aunt Rachel, that I may meet Mr. Drake, although that is no part of my

programme.

“Of course, I shall have to look charming in any case, and I am already

busy with my dress. It is a black silk gown with a tight-fitting bodice.

The bodice has windbag sleeves, formed of shawl pieces of guipure lace,

and some lilies of the valley on the breast, finished with a waistband

of heliotrope velvet, and I am going to wear long black gloves all the

way up my arms, which are growing round and plump, and lovely enough for

anything. The skirt is my old one, and I got the lace for three-and-six,

so I am not ruining myself, you see; and though my hair is getting

redder than ever, red is the fashionable colour in London now, therefore

I sha'n't waste much money on dyes.

“But for all this brave exterior, when the time comes I know that down

in my heart I shall be terrified. It will be like the first dive of the

year. 'One plunge, Glory, my child,' and then over I'll go! I partly

realize already what it will be like by my experiences on Sunday

evenings when the celebrities come here after church, and Mr. Koenig

exhibits me to admiring friends and tells them how I brought him 'goot

look,' and I overhear them say, 'That girl will show them all something

yet.' Oh, this London is adorable, my dears, with its wit and fashion,

and gaiety and luxury! and I have concluded that to live in the world is

the best thing one can do, after all. Some people say hard things about

it, and want to reform it, or even to leave it altogether; but I love

it! I love it! and think it just charming!

“And now spring is here, and the world is lovely in its yellow and

green. It must be \_urromassy\_ nice over yandher in the 'oilan' too, with

the primroses and the violets and the gorse in the glen. Oh, dear! oh,

dear! I can smell it all three hundred miles away! The lilacs will be

out at Glenfaba now, and Aunt Anna will be collecting her Easter eggs.

Well--wait a whilley, and I'll come to thee, my dears!

“Not a word from John Storm, of course. No doubt he is fighting with

shadows while other people are struggling with realities. They tell me

these Brotherhoods are common in the Church now, though most of them are

secret societies; but the more I think of that kind of religion the more

it looks like setting tasks to try faith, as if God were a coquettish

woman. That reminds me that Mr. Worldly-Wealthy-Wiseman is no longer

a canon, having got himself made archdeacon, and as such he looks more

than ever like a black Spanish cock, being clad, of course, in those

funny clothes, like the bishops, which always make one think their

lordships must be in doubt on getting up in the morning whether they

ought to wear a schoolboy's knickerbockers or a ballet-girl's skirt, so

they settle the difficulty by putting on both. For this reason I try

to avoid him when on duty at the church, lest I should be suddenly

possessed of a devil and behave badly to his face. But this being

Lent, and there being special preachers every day, it chanced on Sunday

morning that I came upon three of him all in a row, and oh, my gracious,

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these!

“It is too bad, though, to think that men like John Storm can't find

room in the Church for the sole of their foot, while this archdemon

is flourishing in it like a green bay tree. Forgive me, grandfather; I

can't help it. But then the Church in the country doesn't seem the same

as in town. \_There\_ you are somehow made to feel that man does a little

and God does all the rest, while \_here\_ we reverse that order of things,

with the result that this seed of the Amalekite--but never mind!

“I went to the Zoo this morning. There was a lion shut up in a cage all

by himself. Such a solemn, splendid, silent fellow; I could have cried.

“But it is the witching hour of night, my daughter, and you must put

yourself to bed. 'Goot look!'

“Glory.”

XVII.

In the middle of the night of Good Friday, John Storm was wakened by

noises in the adjoining cell. There seemed to be the voices of two men

in angry and violent altercation, the one threatening and denouncing,

the other protesting and supplicating.

“The girl is dead--isn't that proof enough?” said one voice. “It's a

lie! It's a false accusation!” said the other voice. “Paul, what are you

going to do?” “Put this bullet in your brain.” “But I'm innocent--I take

the Almighty to witness that I'm innocent. Put the pistol down. Help!

help!” “No use calling--there's nobody in the house.” “Mercy! mercy!

I haven't much money about me, but you shall have it all. Take

everything--everything--and if there's anything I can do to start you in

life--I'm rich, Paul--I have influence--only spare me!” “Scoundrel, do

you think you can buy me as you bought my sister?” “And if I did I was

not the only one.” “Liar! Tell that to herself when you meet her at the

judgment!” “As-sassin!” “Too late--you've met her!”

John Storm listened and understood. The two voices were one voice, which

was the voice of Brother Paul. The lay brother was delirious. His poor

broken brain was rambling in the ways of the past. He was re-enacting

the scene of his crime.

John hesitated. His impulse was to fly into Paul's room and lay hold

of him, that he might prevent him from doing himself any injury. But he

remembered the law of the community, that no member of it should go into

the cell of another under pain of grievous penance. And then there was

the rule of silence and solitude which had not yet been lifted away.

But monks are great sophists, and at the next moment John Storm had told

himself that it was not Brother Paul who was in the adjoining room, but

only his poor perishing body, labouring through the last sloughs of

the twilight land of death. Paul himself, his soul, his spirit, was far

away. Hence it could be no sin to go into the cell of one whose senses

were not there.

His own door was locked, but he scraped back the key and lit his candle,

and stepped into the passage. The voices were still loud in Paul's room,

but no one seemed to hear them. Not another sound broke the silence of

the sleeping house. The cell beyond Paul's was empty. It was Brother

Andrew's cell, and Andrew was at the door downstairs.

When John Storm entered the dark room, candle in hand, Brother Paul was

standing in the middle of the floor with one hand outstretched and a

ghastly and appalling smile upon his face. He was pale as death, his

eyes were ablaze, his forehead was streaming with perspiration, and he

was breathing from the depths of his chest. He wiped the dews from his

brow and said in a choking voice, “He has died as he lived--a liar and a

scoundrel!”

John took him by the hand and drew him to the bed, and, putting him to

sit there, he tried to soothe and comfort him. He was terrified at first

by the sound of his own voice, but the sophism that had served to bring

him, served to support him also, and he told himself it could be no

breach of the rule of silence to speak to one who was not there. The

delirium of the lay brother spent itself at length, and he fell into a

deep sleep.

Next day, when Brother Andrew came to John's cell with the food, he

began to sing as if to himself while he bustled about the room.

“Brother Paul is sinking--he is sinking rapidly--Father Jerrold has

confessed him--he has taken the sacrament--and is very patient.”

This, as if it had been a Gregorian chant, the great fellow had hit

upon as a means of communicating with John without breaking the rule and

committing sin.

John did not lock his door on the following night. On going to bed he

listened for the noises he had heard before, half fearing and yet half

wishing that he might hear them again. But he heard nothing, and toward

midnight he fell asleep. Something made him shudder, and he awoke with

the sensation of moonlight on his face. The moon was indeed shining, and

its sepulchral light was on a figure that stood by the foot of the bed.

It was Paul, with a livid face, murmuring his name in a voice almost as

faint as a breath.

John leaped up and put his arms about him.

“You are ill, brother--very ill.”

“I am dying.”

“Help! help!” cried John, and he made for the door.

“Hush, brother, hush!”

“Oh, I don't care for rule. Rule is nothing in a case like this. And,

besides, it is an understood thing---- Help!”

“I implore you, I conjure you!” said Paul in a voice strangled by

weakness. “Let them leave us together a little longer. It was by my own

wish that I was left alone. I have something to say to you--something to

confess. I have to ask your pardon.”

In two strides John had reached the door, but he came back without

opening it.

“Why, my poor lad, what have you done to me?”

“When you let me out of the house to go in search of my sister----”

“That was long ago; we'll not talk of it now, brother.”

“But I can not die in peace without telling you. You remember that I had

something to say to her?”

“Yes.”

“It was a threat. I was going to tell her that unless she gave up her

way of life I should find the man who had been the cause of it and

follow him up and kill him.”

“It was only a temptation of the devil, brother, and it is past; and

now----”

“Don't you see what I was going to do? I was going to bring trouble and

disgrace upon you also as my comrade and accomplice. That's what a man

comes to when Satan----”

“But God willed it otherwise, brother; let us say no more about it.”

“You forgive me, then?”

“Forgive? It is I who ought to ask for your forgiveness, and perhaps if

I told you everything----”

“There is something else. Listen! The Almighty is calling me; I have no

time to lose.”

“But you are so cold, brother! Lie on the bed, and I'll cover you with

the bedclothes. Oh, never fear; they sha'n't separate us again. If the

Father were at home--he is so good and tender-hearted--but no matter.

There, there!”

“You will despise and hate me--you who are so holy and brave, and have

given up everything and conquered the world, and even triumphed over

love itself!”

“Don't say that, brother.”

“It's true, isn't it? Everybody knows what a holy life you live.”

“Hush!”

“But I have never lived the religious life at all, and I only came to it

as a refuge from the law and the gallows; and if the Father hadn't----”

“Another time, brother.”

“Yes, the story I told the police was true, and I had really----”

“Hush, brother, hush! I won't hear you. What you are saying is for

God's ear only, and, whatever you have done, God will judge your soul in

mercy. We have only to ask him----”

“Quick, then; the last sands are running out!” and he strove to rise and

kneel.

“Lie still, brother: God will accept the humiliation of your soul.”

“No, no, let me up; let me kneel beside you. The prayer for the

dying--say it with me, Brother Storm; let us say it together. 'O Lord,

save----'”

\_“'O Lord, save thy servant,

“'Which putteth his trust in thee.

“'Send him help from thy holy place.

“'And ... evermore ... mightily defend him.

“'Let the enemy have no advantage over him.

“'Nor the ... wicked----

“'Be unto him, O Lord, a strong tower.

“'From the----

“'O Lord, hear our prayers.

“'And----'”\_

“Paul! Paul! Speak to me! Speak! Don't leave me! We shall console and

support each other. You shall come to me, I will go to you. No matter

about the religious life. One word! My lad, my lad!”

But Brother Paul had gone. The captured eagle with the broken wing had

slipped its chain at last.

In the terrible peace which followed the air of the room seemed to

become empty. John Storm felt chill and dizzy, and a great awe fell

upon him. The courage which he had built up in sight of Brother Paul's

sufferings ebbed rapidly away, and his old fear of rule flowed back.

He must carry the lay brother to his cell; he must be ignorant of his

death; he must conceal and cover up everything. The moon had gone by

this time, for it was near to morning, and the shadows of night were

contending with the leaden hues of dawn.

He opened the door and listened. The house was still quite silent. He

walked on tip-toe to the end of the corridor, pausing at every cell.

There was no sound anywhere, except the sonorous breathing of some heavy

sleeper and the ticking of the clock in the hall.

Then he returned to the chamber of death, and, lifting the dead man in

his arms, he carried him back to the room which he had left as a living

man. The body was light, and he scarcely felt its weight, for the limbs

under the cassock had dried up like withered twigs. He stretched them

out on the bed that they might be fit for death's composing hand, and

then closed the eyes and laid the hands together on the breast, and took

the heavy cross that hung about the neck and put it as well as he could

into the nerveless fingers. By this time the daylight had overcome the

shadows of the fore-dawn, and the ruddy glow of morning was gliding into

the room. Traffic was beginning to stir in the sleeping city, and a cart

was rattling down the street.

One glance more he gave at the dead brother's face, and going down on

his knees beside it he said a prayer and crossed himself. Then he rose

and stole back to his room and shut the door without a sound.

There was a boundless relief when this was done, and partly from relief

and partly from exhaustion he fell asleep. He slept for a few

minutes only, but sleep knows no time, and a moment in its garden of

forgetfulness will wipe out the bitterness of a life. When he awoke he

stretched out his hand as he was accustomed to do and rapped three times

on the wall. But the tide of consciousness returned to him even as he

did so, and in the dead silence that followed his very heart grew cold.

Then the Father Minister began to awaken the household. His deep call

and the muffled answer which followed it rose higher and higher and came

nearer and nearer, and every step as he approached seemed to beat upon

John Storm's brain. He had reached the topmost story--he was coming down

the corridor--he was standing before the door of the dead man's cell.

“Benedicamus Domino!” he called, but no answer came back to him. He

called again, and there was a short and terrible silence.

John Storm held his breath and listened. By the faint click of the lock

he knew that the door had been opened, and that the Father Minister

had entered the room. There was a muttered exclamation and then another

short silence, and after that there came the click of the lock again.

The door had been closed, and the Father Minister had resumed his

rounds. When he called at the door of John Storm's cell not a tone of

his voice would have told that anything unusual had taken place.

The bell rang, and the brothers trooped down the stairs. Presently the

low, droning sound of their voices came up from the chapel where they

were saying Lauds. But the service had scarcely ended when the Father

Minister's step was on the stair again. This time another was with him.

It was the doctor. They entered the brother's room and closed the door

behind them. From the other side of the wall John Storm followed every

movement and every word.

“So he has gone at last, poor soul!”

“Is he long dead, doctor?”

“Some hours, certainly. Was there nobody with him then?”

“He didn't wish for anybody. And then you told us that nothing could he

done, and that he might live a month.”

“Still, a dying man, you know---- But how strangely composed he looks!

And then the cross on his breast as well!”

“He was very devout and penitent. He made his last devotion yesterday

with an intensity of joy such as I have rarely witnessed.”

“His eyes closed, too! You are sure there was nobody with him?”

“Nobody whatever.”

There was a moment's silence and then the doctor said, “Well, he has

slipped his anchor at last, poor soul!”

“Yes, he has launched on the ocean of the love of God. May we all be as

ready when our call comes!”

They came back to the corridor, and John heard their footsteps going

downstairs. Then for some minutes there were unusual noises below. Rapid

steps were coming and going, the hall bell was ringing, and the front

door was opening and shutting.

An hour later Brother Andrew came with the breakfast. He was obviously

excited, and putting down the tray he began to busy himself in the room

and to sing, as before, in, his pretence of a Gregorian chant:

“Brother Paul is dead--he died in the night--there was nobody with

him--we are sorry he has left us, but glad he is at peace-God rest the

soul of our poor Brother Paul!”

It was Easter Day. At midday service in the church the brothers sang the

Easter hymn, and a mighty longing took hold of John Storm for his own

resurrection from his living grave.

Next day there was much coming and going between the world outside and

the adjoining cell, and late at night there were heavy and shambling

footsteps, and even some coarse and ribald talk.

“Bear a 'and, myte.”

“Well, they won't have their backs broke as carry this one downstairs.

He ain't a Danny Lambert, anyway.”

“No, they don't feed ye on Bovril in plyces syme as this. I'll lay ye

odds yer own looking-glass wouldn't know ye arter three months 'ard on

religion and dry tommy.”

“It pawses me 'ow people tyke to it. Gimme my pint of four-half, and my

own childring to follow me.”

Early on the following morning a stroke rang out on the bell, then

another stroke, and again another.

“It is the knell,” thought John.

A group of the lay brothers came up and passed into the room. “Now!”

said one, as if giving a signal, and then they passed out again with the

measured steps of men who bear a burden. “They are taking him away,” he

thought.

He listened to their retreating footsteps. “He has gone,” he murmured.

The passing bell continued to ring out minute by minute, and presently

there was the sound of singing. “It is the service for the dead,” he

told himself.

After a while both the bell and the singing ceased, and then there was

no sound anywhere except the dull rumble of the traffic in the city

outside--the deep murmur of the mighty sea that flows on forever.

“What am I doing?” he asked himself. “What bolts and bars are keeping

me? I am guilty of a folly. I am degrading myself.”

At midday Brother Andrew came with his food. “Brother Paul is buried,”

he sang, “the coffin was beautiful--it was covered with flowers--we

buried him in his cassock, with his beads and psalter--we left the cross

on his breast--he loved it and died with it in his hands--the Father has

come home--he said mass this morning.”

John Storm could bear no more. He pushed the lay brother aside and made

straight for the Superior's room.

The Father was sitting before the fire, looking sad and low and weary.

He rose to his feet with a painful smile, as John broke into his cell

with blazing eyes, and cried in a choking voice:

“Father, I can not live the religious life any longer! I have tried

to--with all my soul and strength I've tried to, but I can not, I can

not! This life of prayer and penance and meditation is stifling me, and

corrupting me, and crushing the man out of me, and I can not bear it.”

“What are you saying, my son?”

“I have been deceiving you and myself and everybody.”

“Deceiving me?”

“It was for my own ends and not Brother Paul's that I helped him to

break obedience, and so injure his health and hasten his death.”

“Your own?”

“I, too, had a sister in the world, and my heart was hungry for news of

her.”

“A sister?”

“Some one nearer than a sister--and all my spiritual life has been a

sham.”

“My son, my son!”

“Forgive me, Father. I shall love you and honour you and revere you

always; but I must break my obedience and leave you, or I shall be a

hypocrite and a liar and a cheat.”

XVIII.

The dinner party at the Home Secretary's took place on Wednesday, in the

week after Easter. It had rained during the day, but cleared up toward

night. Glory and Koenig had taken an omnibus to Waterloo Place, and then

walked up the wide street that ends with the wide steps going down to

the park. Two lines of lofty stone houses go off to right and left, and

the house they were going to was in one of them.

A footman received them with sombre but easy familiarity. The artistes?

Yes. They were shown into the library, and light refreshments were

brought in to them on a tray. Three other members of the choral company

were there already. Glory was seeing it all for the first time, and

Koenig was describing and explaining everything in broken whispers.

A band was playing in the well of the circular staircase, and a second

footman stood in an alcove behind an outwork of hats and overcoats.

The first footman reappeared. Were the artistes ready to go to the

drawing-room?

They followed him upstairs. The band had stopped, and there was the

distant hum of voices and the crackle of plates. Waiters were coming

and going from the dining-room, and the butler stood at the door giving

instructions. At one moment there was a glimpse within of ladies

in gorgeous dresses, and a table laden with silver and bright with

fairy-lamps. When the door opened the voices grew louder, when it closed

the sounds were deadened.

The upper landing opened on to a \_salon\_ which had three windows down

to the ground, and half of each stood open. Outside there was a wide

terrace lit up by Chinese and Moorish lanterns. Beyond was the dark

patch of the park, and farther still the towers of the Abbey and the

clock of Westminster, but the great light was not burning to-night.

“De House naivare sits on Vednesday night,” said Koenig.

They passed into the drawing-room, which was empty. The standing lamps

were subdued by coverings of yellow-silk lace. There was a piano and an

organ.

“Ve'll stay here,” said Koenig, opening the organ, and Glory stood by

his side.

Presently there were ripples of laughter, sounds of quick,

indistinguishable voices, waves of heliotrope, and the rustle of silk

dresses on the stairs. Then the ladies entered. Two or three of them who

were elderly leaned their right hands on the arms of younger women, and

walked with ebony sticks in their left. An old lady wearing black

satin and a large brooch came last. Koenig rose and bowed to her. Glory

prepared to bow also, but the lady gave her a side inclination of the

head as she sat in a well-cushioned chair under a lamp, and Glory's bow

was abridged.

The ladies sat and talked, and Glory tried to listen. There were little

nothings, punctuated by trills of feminine laughter. She thought the

conversation rather silly. More than once the ladies lifted their

lorgnettes and looked at her. She set her lips hard and looked back

without flinching.

A footman brought tea on a tray, and then there was the tinkle of cup

and saucer, and more laughter. The lady in satin looked round at Koenig,

and he began to play the organ. He played superbly, but nobody seemed

to listen. When he finished there was a pause, and everybody said: “Oh,

thank you; we're all--er----” and then the talk began again. The vocal

soloist sang some ballad of Schumann, and as long as it lasted an old

lady with an ear-trumpet sat at the foot of the piano, and a young girl

spoke into it. When it was over, everybody said, “Ah, that dear old

thing!” Then there was an outbreak of deeper voices from the stairs,

with lustier laughter and heavier steps.

The gentlemen appeared, talking loudly as they entered. Koenig was back

at the organ and playing as if he wished it were the 'cello and the

drum and the whole brass band. Glory was watching everything; it was

beginning to be very funny. Suddenly it ceased to be so. One of the

gentlemen was saying, in a tired drawl: “Old Koenig again! How the old

boy lasts! Seem to have been hearing--him since the Flood, don't you

know.”

It was Lord Robert Ure. Glory caught one glimpse of him, then looked

down at her slipper and pawed at the carpet. He put his glass in his

eye, screwed up the left side of his face, and looked at her.

An elderly man with a leonine head came up to the organ and said: “Got

anything comic, Mr. Koenig? All had the influenza last winter, you know,

and lost our taste for the classical.”

“With pleasure, sir,” said Koenig, and then turning to Glory he touched

her wrist. “How's de pulse? Ach Gott! beating same like a child's! Now

is your turn.”

Glory made a step forward, and the talk grew louder as she was observed.

She heard fragments of it. “Who is she?” “Is she a professional?”

“Oh, no--a lady.” “Sing, does she, or is it whistling?” “No, she's a

professional; we had her last year; she does conjuring.” And then the

voice she had heard before said, “By Jove, old fellow, your young friend

looks like a red standard rose!” She did not flinch. There was a nervous

tremor of the lip, a scarcely perceptible curl of it, and then she

began.

It was Mylecharaine, a Manx ballad in the Anglo-Manx, about a farmer who

was a miser. His daughter was ashamed of him because he dressed shabbily

and wore yellow stockings; but he answered that if he didn't the

stocking wouldn't be yellow that would be forthcoming for her dowry.

She sang, recited, talked, acted, lived the old man, and there was not

a sound until she finished, except laughter and the clapping of hands.

Then there was a general taking of breath and a renewed outbreak

of gossip. “Really, really! How--er--natural!” “Natural--that's it,

natural. I never--er----” “Rather good, certainly; in fact, quite

amusing.” “What dialect is it?” “Irish, of course.” “Of course, of

course,” with many nods and looks of knowledge, and a buzz and a

flutter of understanding. “Hope she'll do something else.” “Hush! she's

beginning.”

It was Ny Kiree fo Niaghtey, a rugged old wail of how the sheep were

lost on the mountains in a great snowstorm; but it was full of ineffable

melancholy. The ladies dropped their lorgnettes, the men's glasses fell

from their eyes and their faces straightened, the noisy old soul with

the ear-trumpet sitting under Glory's arm was snuffling audibly, and at

the next moment there was a chorus of admiring remarks. “'Pon my word,

this is something new, don't you know!” “Fine girl too!” “Fine! Irish

girls often run to it.” “That old miser--you could see him!”

“What's her next piece?--something funny, I hope.”

Koenig's pride was measureless, and Glory did not get off lightly. He

cleared the floor for her, and announced that with the indulgence, etc.,

the young artiste would give an imitation of common girls singing in the

street.

The company laughed until they screamed, and when the song was finished

Glory was being overwhelmed with congratulations and inquiries,

“Charming! All your pieces are charming! But really, my dear young lady,

you must be more careful about our feelings. Those sheep now--it was

really quite too sad.” The old lady with the ear-trumpet asked Glory

whether she could go on for the whole of an afternoon, and if she felt

much fatigued sometimes, and didn't often catch cold.

But the lady in satin came to her relief at last. “You will need some

refreshment,” she said. “Let me see now if I can not----” and she lifted

her glass and looked round the room. At the next moment a voice that

made a shudder pass over her said:

“Perhaps \_I\_ may have the pleasure of taking Miss Quayle down.”

It was Drake. His eyes were as blue and boyish as before, but Glory

observed at once that he had grown a mustache, and that his face and

figure were firmer and more manlike. A few minutes afterward they had

passed through one of the windows on to the terrace and were walking to

and fro.

It was cool and quiet out there after the heat and hubbub of the

drawing-room. The night was soft and still. Hardly a breath of wind

stirred the leaves of the trees in the park below. The rain had left a

dewy moistness in the air, and a fragrant mist was lying over the grass.

The stars were out, and the moon had just risen behind the towers of

Westminster.

Glory was flushed with her success. Her eyes sparkled and her step was

light and free. Drake touched her hand as it lay on his arm and said:

“And now that I've got you to myself I must begin by scolding you.”

They looked at one another and smiled. “Have I displeased you so much

to-night?” she said.

“It's not that. Where have you been all this time?”

“Ah, if you only knew!” She had stopped and was looking into the

darkness.

“I \_want\_ to know. Why didn't you answer my letter?”

“Your letter?” She was clutching at the lilies of the valley in her

bosom.

He tapped her hand lightly and said, “Well, we'll not quarrel this time,

only don't do it again, you know, or else----”

She recovered herself and laughed. Her voice had a silvery ring, and

he thought it was an enchanting smile that played upon her face. They

resumed their walk.

“And now about to-night. You have had a success, of course.”

“Why of course?”

“Because I always knew you must have.”

She was proud and happy. He began to be grave and severe.

“But the drawing-room after dinner is no proper scene for your talents.

The audience is not in the right place or the right mood. Guests and

auditors--their duties clash. Besides, to tell you the truth, art is a

dark continent to people like these.”

“They were kind to me, at all events,” said Glory.

“To-night, yes. The last new man--the last new monkey----”

She was laughing again and swinging along on his arm as if her feet

hardly touched the ground.

“What is the matter with you?”

“Nothing; I am only thinking how polite you are,” and then they looked

at each other again and laughed together.

The mild radiance of the stars was dying into the brighter light of

the moon. A bird somewhere in the dark trees below had mistaken the

moonlight for the dawn, and was making its early call. The clock at

Westminster was striking eleven, and there was the deep rumble of

traffic from the unseen streets round about.

“How beautiful!” said Glory. “It's hard to believe that this can be the

same London that is so full of casinos and clubs and-monasteries.”

“Why, what does a girl like you know about such places?”

She had dropped his arm and was looking over the balcony. The sound of

voices came from the red windows behind them. Then the soloist began to

sing again. His second ballad was the Erl King:

Du liebes Kind, komm' geh' mit mir!

Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir.

“Any news of John Storm?” said Drake.

“Not that I know of.”

“I wonder if you would like him to come out again--now?”

“I wonder!”

At that moment there was a step behind them, and a soft voice said, “I

want you to introduce me, Mr. Drake.”

It was a lady of eight or nine and twenty, wearing short hair brushed

upward and backward in the manner of a man.

“Ah, Rosa--Miss Rosa Macquarrie,” said Drake. “Rosa is a journalist, and

a great friend of mine, Glory. If you want fame, she keeps some of the

keys of it, and if you want friendship---- But I'll leave you together.”

“My dear,” said the lady, “I want you to let me know you.”

“But I've seen you before--and spoken to you,” said Glory.

“Why, where?”

Glory was laughing awkwardly. “Never mind now! Some other time perhaps.”

“The people inside are raving about your voice. 'Where does it come

from?' they are saying--'from a palace or Ratcliffe Highway?' But I

think \_I\_ know. It comes from your heart, my dear. You have lived and

and loved and suffered--and so have I. Here we are in our smart frocks,

dear, but we belong to another world altogether and are the only working

women in the company. Perhaps I can help you a little, and you have

helped me already. I may know you, may I not?”

There was a deep light in Glory's eyes and a momentary quiver of her

eyelids. Then without a word she put her arms about Rosa's neck and

kissed her,

“I was sure of you,” said Rosa. Her voice was low and husky. “Your name

is Glory, isn't it? It wasn't for nothing you were given that name. God

gave it you!”

The party was breaking up and Koenig came for “his star.” “I vill give

you an engagement for one, two, tree year, upon my vord I vill,” he said

as they went downstairs. While the butler took him back to the library

to sign his receipt and receive his cheque, Glory stood waiting by the

billiard table in the hall and Drake and Lord Robert stepped up to her.

“Until when?” said Drake with a smile, but Glory pretended not to

understand him. “I dare say you thought me cynical to-night, Glory. I

only meant that if you are to follow this profession I want you to make

the best of it. Why not look for a wider scene? Why not go directly to

the public?”

“But de lady is engaged to me for tree year,” said Koenig, coming up.

Drake looked at Glory, who shook her head, and then Koenig made an

effort at explanation. It was an understood thing. He had taught her,

taken her into his house, found her in a Sunday----

But Drake interrupted him. If they could help Miss Quayle to a better

market for her genius Mr. Koenig need be no loser by the change. Then

Koenig was pacified, and Drake handed Glory to a cab.

“We're good friends again, aren't we?” he said, touching her hand

lightly.

“Yes,” she answered.

There was a letter from Aunt Rachel waiting for her at the Priory. Aunt

Anna didn't like these frequent changes, and she had no faith in music

or musicians either, but the Parson thought Anna too censorious, and as

for Mr. Koenig's Sunday evening companies, he had no doubt they were of

Germans chiefly, and that they came to talk of Martin Luther and to sing

his hymn. Sorry to say his infirmities were increasing; the burden of

his years was upon him, and he was looking feeble and old.

Glory slept little that night. On going to her room she threw up the

window and sat in front of it, that the soft night breeze might play on

her hot lips and cheeks. The moon was high and the garden was slumbering

under its gentle light. Everything around was hushed, and there was no

sound anywhere except the far-off rumble of the great city, as of the

wind in distant trees. She was thinking of a question which Drake had

put to her.

“I wonder if I should?” she murmured.

And through the silence there was the unheard melody of the German song:

Du liebes Kind, komm' geh' mit mir!

Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir.

XIX.

“The Priory--May Day.

“Dear Aunt Rachel: The great evening is over! Such dresses, such

diamonds--you never saw the like! The smart folks are just like other

human beings, and I was not the tiniest bit afraid of them. My own part

of the programme went off pretty well, I think. Mr. Koenig had arranged

the harmonies and accompaniments of some of our old Manx songs, so I

sang Mylecharaine, and they listened and clapped, and then Ny Kiree

fo Niaghtey, and they cried (and so did I), and then I imitated some

work-girls singing in the streets, and they laughed and laughed until

I laughed too, and then they laughed because I was laughing, and we all

laughed together. It was over and done before I knew where I was, and

everybody was covering me with--well, no, not kisses, as grandfather

used to do, but the society equivalent--ices and jellies--which the

gentlemen were rushing about wildly to get for me.

“But all this is as nothing compared to what is to happen next. I

mustn't whisper a word about it yet, so false face must hide what the

false heart doth know. You'll \_have\_ to forgive me if I succeed, for

nothing is wicked in this world except failure, you know, and a little

sin must be a great virtue if it has grown to be big enough, you see.

There! How sagacious of me! You didn't know what a philosopher you had

in the family, did you, my dears?

“It is to be on the 24th of May. That will be the Queen's birthday over

again; and when I think of all that has happened since the last one I

feel as romantic as a schoolgirl and as sentimental as a nursery maid.

Naturally I am in a fearful flurry over the whole affair, and, to tell

the truth, I have hied me to the weird sisters on the subject--that

is to say, I have been to a fortune-teller, and spent a 'goolden'

half-sovereign on the creature at one fell swoop. But she predicts

wonderful things for me, so I am satisfied. The newspapers are to blaze

with my name; I am to have a dazzling success and become the idol of the

hour--all of which is delightful and entrancing, and quite reasonable at

the money. Grandfather will reprove me for tempting Providence, and, of

course, John Storm, if he knew it, would say that I shouldn't do such

things under any circumstances; yet to tell me I oughtn't to do this and

I oughtn't to do that is like saying I oughtn't to have red hair and

I oughtn't to catch the measles. I can't help it! I can't help it! so

what's the good of breaking one's heart about it?

“But I hadn't got to wait for \_Hecate et cie\_ for what related to the

newspapers. You must know, dear Aunt Rachel, that I \_did\_ meet Mr. Drake

at the house of the Home Secretary, and he introduced me to a Miss Rosa

Macquarrie, who is no longer very young or beautiful, but a dear for all

that! and she, being a journalist, has bruited my praises abroad, with

the result that all the world is ringing with my virtues. Listen, all

men and women, while I sound mine own glory out of a column as long as

the Duke of York's:

“'She is young and tall, and has auburn hair' (always thought it was

red myself) 'and large gray eyes, one of which seems at a distance to be

brown' (it squints), 'giving an effect of humour and coquetry and power

rarely, if ever, seen in any other face.... Her voice has startling

varieties of tone, being at one moment soft, cooing, and liquid, and at

another wild, weird, and plaintive; and her face, which is not strictly

beautiful' (oh!), 'but striking and unforgetable, has an extraordinary

range of expression.... She sings, recites, speaks, laughs, and cries

(literally), and some of her selections are given in a sort of Irish

\_patois\_' (oh, my beloved Manx!) 'that comes from her girlish lips

with charming vivacity and drollness.' All of which, though it is quite

right, and no more than my due, \_of course\_, made me sob so long and

loud that my good little hippopotamus came upstairs to comfort me, but,

finding me lying on the floor, he threw up his hands and cried, '\_Ach\_

Gott! I t'ought it vas a young lady, but vhatever is it?'

“Yet wae's me! Sometimes I think how many poor girls there must be who

have never had a chance, while I have had so many and such glorious

ones; who can not get anybody to listen to them, while I am so pampered

and praised; who live in narrow alleys and serve in little dark shops,

where men and men-things talk to them as they can't talk to their

sisters and wives, while I am held aloft in an atmosphere of admiration

and respect: who earn their bread in clubs and casinos, where they

breathe the air of the hotbeds of hell, while I am surrounded by

everything that ennobles and refines! O God, forgive me if I am a

vain, presumptuous creature, laughing at everything and everybody, and

sometimes forgetting that many a poor girl who is being tossed about in

London is just as good as me, and as clever and as brave.

“But hoot! 'I likes to be jolly and I allus is.' So Aunt Anna doesn't

like this Wandering Jew existence! Well, do you know I always thought

I should love a gipsy life. It has a sense of movement that must be

delightful, and then I love going fast. Do you remember the days when

'Caesar' used to take the bit in his teeth and bolt with me! Lo, there

was little me, cross-legged on his bare back, with nothing to trust to

but Providence and a pair of rope reins; but, oh my! I couldn't breathe

for excitement and delight! Dear old maddest of created 'Caesars,' I

feel as if I were whacking at him yet! What do you think of me? But we

'that be females are the same craythurs alwis', as old Chalse used to

say, and what a woman is in the cradle she continues to be to the end.

There again! I wonder who told you that, young lady!

“But to tell you the truth at last, dear Aunt Rachel, there is something

I have kept back until now, because I couldn't bear the thought of any

of you being anxious on my account, especially grandfather, who thinks

of Glory so much too often as things are. Can't you guess what it is?

I couldn't help taking up my life of Wandering Jew, because I was

dismissed from the hospital! Didn't you understand that, my dears? I

thought I was telling you over and over again. Yes, dismissed as unfit

to be a nurse, and so I was, according to the order of the institution

first, and human love and pity last. But all's well that ends well, you

know, and now that my wanderings seem to be over and I am in my

right place at length, I feel like one who is coming out of a long

imprisonment, a great peril, a darkness deeper even than John Storm's

cell. And if I ever become a famous woman, and good men will listen to

me, I will tell them to be tender and merciful to poor girls who are

trying to live in London and be good and strong, and that the true

chivalry is to band themselves together against the other men who are

selfish and cruel and impure. Oh, this great, glorious, devilish, divine

London! It must stand to the human world as the seething, boiling,

bubbling waters of Niagara do to the world of Nature. Either a girl

floats over its rapids like a boat, and in that case she draws her

breath and thanks God, or she is tossed into its whirlpool like a

dead body and goes round and round until she finds the vortex and is

swallowed up!

“There! I have blown off my steam, and now to business. Mr. Drake is to

give a luncheon party in his rooms on the twenty-fourth, in honour of

my experiment, but the great event itself will not come off until nearly

half-past nine that night. By that time the sun will have set over the

back of the sea at Peel, the blackbird will have given you his last

'guy-smook,' and all the world will be dropping asleep. Now, if you'll

only remember to say just then, 'God bless Glory!' I'll feel strong and

big and brave.

“Your poor, silly, sentimental girlie, Glory.”

XX.

Some weeks had passed, and it was the morning of the last day of John

Storm's residence at Bishopsgate Street. After calling the Brotherhood,

the Father had entered John's room and was resting on the end of the

bed.

“You are quite determined to leave us?”

“Quite determined, Father.”

The Father sighed deeply, and said in broken sentences: 'Our house is

passing through terrible trials, my son. Perhaps we did wrong to come

here. There is no cross in our foundations, and we have built on a

worldly footing. 'Unless the Lord build the house--' It was good of

you to delay the execution of your purpose, but now that the time

has come--I had set my heart on you, my son. I am an old man now, and

something of the affection of the natural father----”

“Father, if you only knew----”

“Yes, yes; I know, I know. You have suffered, and it is not for me to

reproach you. The novitiate has its great joys, but it has its great

trials also. Self has to be got rid of, faith has to be exerted,

obedience has to be learned, and, above all, the heart has to be

detached from its idols in the world--a devoted mother, it may be; a

dear sister; perhaps a dearer one still.”

There was silence for a moment. John's head was down; he could not

speak.

“That you wish to return to the world only shows that you came before

you heard the call of God. Some other voice seemed to speak to you, and

you listened and thought it was God's voice. But God's voice will come

to you yet, and you will hear it and answer it and not another---- Have

you anywhere to go to when you leave this house?”

“Yes, the home of a good woman. I have written to her--I think she will

receive me.”

“All that you brought with you will be returned, and if you want

money----”

“No, I came to you as a beggar--let me leave you as a beggar too.”

“There is one thing more, my son.”

“What is it, Father?”

The old man's voice was scarcely audible. “You are breaking obedience

by leaving us before the end of your novitiate, and the community must

separate itself from you, though you are only a novice, as from one who

has violated his vow and cast himself off from grace. This will have

to be done before you cross our threshold. It is our duty to the

Brotherhood--it is also our duty to God. You understand that?”

“Yes.”

“It will be in the church, a few minutes before midday service.”

The Father rose to go. “Then that is all?”

“That is all.”

The Father's voice was breaking. “Good-bye, my son.”

“Good-bye, Father, and God forgive me!”

A leather trunk which John had brought with him on the day he came to

the Brotherhood was returned to his room, containing the clothes he

had worn in the outer world, as well as his purse and watch and other

belongings. He dressed himself in his habit as a clergyman, and put the

cassock of the society over it, for he knew that to remove that must be

part of the ordeal of his expulsion. Then the bell rang for breakfast,

and he went down to the refectory.

The brothers received him in silence, hardly looking up as he entered,

though by their furtive glances he could plainly see that he was the

only subject that occupied their thoughts. When the meal was over he

tried to mingle among them, that he might say farewell to as many as

were willing that he should do so. Some gave him their hands with

prompt good will, some avoided him, some turned their backs upon him

altogether.

But if his reception in the refectory was chilling, his welcome in the

courtyard was warm enough. At the first sound of his footsteps on the

paved way the dog came from his quarters under the sycamore. One moment

the creature stood and looked at him with its sad and bloodshot eyes;

then, with a bound, it threw its fore paws on his breast, and then

plunged around him and uttered deep bays that were like the roar of

thunder.

He sat on the seat and caressed the dog, and his heart grew full and

happy. The morning was bright with sunshine, the air was fragrant with

the leafage of spring, and birds were singing and rejoicing in the tree.

Presently Brother Andrew came and sat beside him. The lay brother, like

a human dog, had been following him about all the morning, and now in

his feeble way he began to talk of his mother, and to wonder if John

would ever see her. Her name was Pincher, and she was a good woman. She

lived in Crook Lane, Crown Street, Soho, and kept house for his brother,

who was a pawnbroker. But his brother, poor fellow! was much given to

drink, and perhaps that had been a reason why he himself had left home.

John promised to call on her, and then Brother Andrew began to cry. The

sprawling features of the great fellow were almost laughable to look

upon.

The bell rang for Terce. While the brothers were at prayers, John took

his last look over the house. With the dog at his heels--the old thing

seemed determined to lose sight of him no more--he passed slowly through

the hall and into the community room and up the stairs and down the top

corridor. He looked again at every inscription on the walls, though he

knew them all by heart and had read them a hundred times. When he came

to his own cell he was touched by a strange tenderness. Place where he

had thought so much, prayed so much, suffered so much--it was dear to

him, after all! He went up on to the tower. How often he had been drawn

there as by a devilish fascination! The great city looked innocent

enough now under its mantle of sunlight, dotted over with green, but how

dense, how difficult! Then the bell rang for midday service, though it

was not yet noon, and he went down to the hall. The brothers were there

preparing to go into the church. The order of the procession was the

same as on the day of his dedication, except that Brother Paul was no

longer with them--Brother Andrew going first with the cross, then the

lay brothers, then the religious, then the Father, and John Storm last

of all.

Though the courtyard was full of sunshine, the church looked dark and

gloomy. Curtains were drawn across the windows, and the altar was draped

as for a funeral. As soon as the brothers had taken their places in the

choir the Father stood on the altar steps and said:

“If any member of this community has one unfaithful thought of going

back to the outer world, I charge him to come to this altar now. But woe

to him through whom the offence cometh! Woe to him who turns back after

taking up the golden plough!”

John was kneeling in his place in the second row of the choir. The eyes

of the community were upon him. He hesitated a moment, then rose and

stepped up to the altar.

“My son,” said the Father, “it is not yet too late. I see your fate as

plainly as I see you now. Shall I tell you what it is? Can you bear to

hear it? I see you going out into a world which has nothing to satisfy

the cravings of your soul. I see you foredoomed to failure and suffering

and despair. I see you coming back to us within a year with a broken and

bleeding heart. I see you taking the vows of lifelong consecration. Can

you face that future?”

“I must.”

The Father drew a long breath. “It is inevitable,” he said; and, taking

a book from the altar, he read the awful service of the degradation:

\_“By the authority of God Almighty, Father [Symbol: Patée], Son, and

Holy Ghost, and by our own authority, we, the members of the Society of

the Holy Gethsemane, do take away from thee the habit of our Order, and

depose and degrade and deprive thee of all rights and privileges in the

spiritual goods and prayers which, by the grace of God, are done among

us.”\_

“Amen! Amen!” said the brothers.

During the reading of the service John had been kneeling. The Father

motioned to him to rise, and proceeded to remove the cord with which he

had bound him at his consecration. When this was done, he signalled to

Brother Andrew to take off the cassock.

The bell was tolled. The Father dropped on his knees. The brothers,

hoarse and husky, began to sing \_In exitu Israel de Aegypto\_. Their

heads were down, their voices seemed to come up out of the earth.

It was all over now. John Storm turned about, hardly able to see his

way. Brother Andrew went before him to open the door of the sacristy.

The lay brother was crying audibly.

The sun was still shining in the courtyard, and the birds were still

singing and rejoicing. The first thing of which John was conscious was

that the dog was licking his rigid fingers.

A moment later he was in the little covered passage to the street, and

Brother Andrew was opening the iron gate.

“Good-bye, my lad!”

He stretched out his hand, then remembered that he was an excommunicated

man, and tried to draw it back; but the lay brother had snatched at it

and lifted it to his lips.

The dog was following him into the street.

“Go back, old friend.”

He patted the old creature on the head, and Brother Andrew laid hold of

it by the loose skin at its neck. A hansom was waiting for him with his

trunk on the top.

“Victoria Square, Westminster,” he called. The cab was moving off, when

there was a growl and a lurch--the dog had broken away and was running

after it.

How crowded the streets were! How deafening was the traffic! The church

bell was ringing for midday service. What a thin tinkle it made out

there, yet how deep was its boom within! Stock Exchange men with their

leisurely activity were going in by their seven doorways to their great

market place in Capel Court.

He began to feel a boundless relief. How his heart was beating! With

what a strange and deep emotion he found himself once more in the world!

Driving in the dense and devious thoroughfares was like sailing on a

cross sea outside a difficult headland. He could smell the brine and

feel the flick of the foam on his lips and cheeks. It was liberty, it

was life!

Feeling anxious about the dog, he drew up the cab for a moment. The

faithful creature was running under the driver's seat. Before the cab

could start again a line of sandwich men had passed in front of it.

Their boards contained a single word. The word was “GLORIA.”

He saw it, yet it barely arrested his consciousness. Somehow it seemed

like an echo from the existence he had left behind.

The noises of life were as wine in his veins now. He was burning with

impatience to overtake his arrears of knowledge, to see what the world

had gone through in his absence. Leaning over the door of the hansom, he

read the names of the streets and the signs over the shops, and tried to

identify the houses which had been rebuilt and the thoroughfares which

had been altered. But the past was the past, and the clock would turn

back for no man. These men and women in the streets knew all that had

happened. The poorest beggar on the pavement knew more than he did.

Nearly a year of his life was gone--in prayer, in penance, in fasting,

in visions, in dreams--dropped out, left behind, and lost forever.

Going by the Bank, the cab drew up again to allow a line of omnibuses to

pass into Cheapside. Every omnibus had its board for advertisements, and

nearly every board contained the word he had seen before--“GLORIA.”

“Only the name of some music-hall singer,” he told himself. But the name

had begun to trouble him. It had stirred the fibres of memory, and made

him think of the past--of his yacht, of Peel, of his father, and finally

of Glory--and again of Glory--and yet again of Glory.

He saw that flags were flying on the Mansion House and on the Bank,

and, pushing up the trap of the hansom, he asked if anything unusual was

going on.

“Lawd, down't ye know what day it is terday, sir? It's the dear ole

laidy's birthday. That's why all the wimming's going abart in their

penny carridges. Been through a hillness, sir?”

“Yes, something of that sort.”

“Thort so, sir.”

When the cab started afresh he began to tell himself what he was

going to do in the future. He was going to work among the poor and the

outcast, the oppressed and the fallen. He was going to search for them

and find them in their haunts of sin and misery. Nothing was to be too

mean for him. Nothing was to be common or unclean. No matter about

his own good name! No matter if he was only one man in a million! The

kingdom of heaven was like a grain of mustard seed.

When he came within sight of St. Paul's the golden cross on the dome was

flashing like a fiery finger in the blaze of the midday sun. That was

the true ensign! It was a monstrous and wicked fallacy, a gloomy and

narrow formula, that religion had to do with the affairs of the other

world only. Work was religion! Work was prayer! Work was praise! Work

was the love of man and the glory of God!

Glorious gospel! Great and deathless symbol!

THIRD BOOK.

\_THE DEVIL'S ACRE\_.

I.

Behind Buckingham Palace there is a little square of modest houses

standing back from the tide of traffic and nearly always as quiet as a

cloister. At one angle of the square there is a house somewhat larger

than the rest but just as simple and unassuming. In the dining-room of

this house an elderly lady was sitting down to lunch alone, with the

covers laid for another at the opposite end of the table.

“Hae ye the spare room ready, Emma?”

“Yes, ma'am,” said the maid.

“And the sheets done airing? And baith the pillows? And the

pillow-slips--and everything finished?”

The maid was answering “Yes” to each of these questions when a hansom

cab came rattling up to the front of the house, and the old lady leaped

out of her seat.

“It's himself!” she cried, and she ran like a girl to the hall.

The door had been opened before she got there, and a deep voice was

saying, “Is Mrs. Callender----”

“It's John! My gracious! It's John Storm!” the old woman cried, and she

lifted both hands as if to fling herself into his arms.

“My guidness, laddie, but you gave poor auld Jane sic a start! Expected

ye? To be sure we expected you, and terribly thrang we've been all

morning making ready. Only my daft auld brain must have been a wee ajee.

But,” smiling through her tears, “has a body never a cheek, that you

must be kissing at her hand? And is this your dog?” looking down at the

bloodhound. “Welcome? Why, of course it's welcome. What was I saying the

day, Emma? 'I'd like fine to have a dog,' didn't I? and here it is to

our hand.--Away with ye, James, man, and show Mr. Storm to his room,

and then find a bed for the creature somewhere. Letters for ye, laddie?

Letters enough, and you'll find them on the table upstairs. Only, mind

ye, the lunch is ready, and your fish is getting cold.”

John Storm opened his letters in his room. One of them was from his

uncle, the Prime Minister: “I rejoice to hear of your most sensible

resolution. Come and dine with me at Downing Street this day week at

seven o'clock. I have much to say and much to ask, and I expect to be

quite alone.”

Another was from his father: “I am not surprised at your intelligence,

but if anything could exceed the folly of going into a monastery it is

the imbecility of coming out of it. The former appears to be a subject

of common talk in this island already, and no doubt the latter will soon

be so.”

John flinched as at a cut across the face and then smiled a smile of

relief. Apparently Glory was writing home wherever she was, and there

was good news in that, at all events. He went downstairs.

“Come your way in, laddie, and let me look at ye again. Man, but your

face is pale and your bonnie eyes are that sunken. But sit ye down and

eat. They've been starving ye, I'm thinking, and miscalling it religion.

It's enough to drive a reasonable body to drink. Carnal I am, laddie,

and I just want to put some flesh on your bones. Monks indeed! And in

this age of the world too! Little Jack Horners sitting in corners and

saying, 'Oh, what a good boy am I!'”

John defended his late brethren. They were holy men; they lived a holy

life; he had not been good enough for their company. “But I feel like a

sailor home from sea,” he said; “tell me what has happened.”

“Births, marriages, and deaths? I suppose ye're like the lave of the

men, and think nothing else matters to a woman. But come now, more

chicken? No? A wee bitty? Aye, but ye're sair altered, laddie! Weel,

where can a body begin?”

“The canon--how is he?”

“Fine as fi'pence. Guid as ever in the pulpit? Aye, but it's a pity he

doesna' bide there, for he's naething to be windy of when he comes out

of it. Deacon now, bless ye, or archdeacon, and some sic botherment, and

his daughter is to be married to yon slip of a curate with the rabbit

mouth and the heather legs. Weel, she wasna for all markets, ye ken.”

“And Mrs. Macrae?”

“Gone over to the angels. Dead? Nae, ye're too expecting altogether.

She's got religion though, and holds missionary meetings in her

drawing-room of a Monday, and gives lunches to actor folk of a Sunday,

and now a poor woman that's been working for charity and Christianity

all her days has no chance with her anyway.”

“And Miss Macrae?”

“Poor young leddy, they're for marrying her at last! Aye, to that Ure

man, that lord thing with the eyeglass. I much misdoubt but her heart's

been somewhere else, and there's ane auld woman would a hantle rather

have heard tell of her getting the richt man than seeing the laddie bury

hisel' in a monastery. She's given in at last though, and it's to be a

grand wedding they're telling me. Your Americans are kittle

cattle--just the Jews of the West seemingly, and they must do everything

splendiferously. There are to be jewels as big as walnuts, and bouquets

five feet in diameter, and a rope of pearls for a necklace, and a

rehearsal of the hale thing in the church. Aye, indeed, a rehearsal, and

the 'deacon, honest man, in the middle of the magnificence.”

John Storm's pale face was twitching. “And the hospital,” he said, “has

anything happened there--?”

“Nothing.”

“No other case such as the one----”

“Not since yon poor bit lassie.”

“Thank God!”

“It was the first ill thing I had heard tell of her for years, and

the nurses are good women for all that. High-spirited? Aye; but dear,

bright, happy things, to think what they have to know and to be present

at! Lawyers, doctors, and nurses see the worst of human nature, and

she'd be a heartless woman who'd no make allowances for them, poor

creatures!”

John Storm had risen from the table with a flushed face, making many

excuses. He would step round to the hospital; he had questions to ask

there, and it would be a walk after luncheon.

“Do,” said Mrs. Callender, “but remember dinner at six. And hark ye,

hinny, this house is to be your hame until you light on a better one, so

just sleep saft in it and wake merrily. And Jane Callender is to be your

auld auntie until some ither body tak's ye frae her, and then it'll no

be her hand ye'll be kissing for fear of her wrinkles, I'm thinking.”

The day was bright, the sun was shining, and the streets were full of

well-groomed horses in gorgeous carriages with coachmen in splendid

liveries going to the drawing-room in honour of the royal birthday. As

John went by the palace the approaches to it were thronged, the band

of the Household Cavalry was playing within the rails, and officers in

full-dress uniform, members of the diplomatic service with swords

and cocked hats, and ladies in gorgeous brocades carrying bouquets

of orchids and wearing tiaras of diamonds and large white plumes were

filing through the gate toward the throne-room.

The hospital looked strangely unfamiliar after so short an absence,

and there were new faces among the nurses who passed to and fro in the

corridors. John asked for the matron, and was received with constrained

and distant courtesy. Was he well? Quite well. They had a resident

chaplain now, and being in priest's orders he had many opportunities

where death was so frequent. Was he sure he had not been ill? John

understood--it was almost as if he had come out of some supernatural

existence, and people looked at him as if they were afraid.

“I came to ask if you could tell me anything of Nurse Quayle?”

The matron could tell him nothing. The girl had gone; they had been

compelled to part with her. Nothing serious? No, but totally unfit to

be a nurse. She had some good qualities certainly--cheerfulness,

brightness, tenderness--and for the sake of these, and his own

interest in the girl, they had put up with inconceivable rudeness and

irregularities. What had become of her? She really could not say. Nurse

Allworthy might know--and the matron took up her pen.

John found the ward Sister with the house doctor at the bed of a

patient. She was short, even curt, said over her shoulder she knew

nothing about the girl, and then turned back to her work. As John passed

out of the ward the doctor followed him and hinted that perhaps the

porter might be able to tell him something.

The porter was difficult at first, but seeing his way clearer after a

while he admitted to receiving letters for the nurse and delivering them

to her when she called. That was long ago, and she had not been there

since New Year's Eve. Then she had given him a shilling and said she

would trouble him no more.

John gave him five shillings and asked if anybody ever called for her.

Yes, once. Who was it? A gentleman. Had he left his name? No, but he had

said he would write. When was that? A day or two before she was there

the last time.

Drake! There could not be a shadow of a doubt of it. John Storm looked

at the clock. It was 3:45. Then he buttoned his coat and crossed the

street to the park with his face in the direction of St. James's Street.

Horatio Drake had given a luncheon in his rooms that day in honour of

Glory's first public appearance. The performance was to come off at

night, but in the course of the morning there had been a dress rehearsal

in the \_salon\_ of the music hall. Twenty men and women, chiefly

journalists and artists, had assembled there to get a first glimpse

of the \_débutante\_, and cameras had lurked behind \_portières\_ and in

alcoves to catch her poses, her expressions, her fleeting smiles, and

humorous grimaces. Then the company had adjourned to Drake's chambers.

The luncheon was now over, the last guest had gone, and the host was in

his dining-room alone.

Drake was standing by the chimney-piece holding at arm's length a

pencil sketch of a woman's beautiful face and lithe figure. “Like

herself--alive to the fingertips,” he thought, and then he propped it

against the pier-glass.

There was a sound of the opening and closing of the outer door

downstairs, and Lord Robert entered the room. He looked heated,

harassed, and exhausted. Shaking out his perfumed pocket handkerchief,

he mopped his forehead, drew a long breath, and dropped into a chair.

“I've done it,” he said; “it's all over.”

Polly Love had lunched with the company that day, and Lord Robert had

returned home with her in order to break the news of his approaching

marriage. While the girl had been removing her hat and jacket he had sat

at the piano and thumbed it, hardly knowing how to begin. All at once he

had said, “Do you know, my dear, I'm to be married on Saturday?” She had

said nothing at first, and he had played the piano furiously. Heavens,

what a frame of mind to be in! Why didn't the girl speak? At last he had

looked round at her, and there she stood grinning, gasping, and white as

a ghost. Suddenly she had begun to cry. Good God, such crying! Yes, it

was all over. Everything had been settled somehow.

“But I'll be in harder condition before I tackle such a job again.”

There was silence for a moment. Drake was leaning on the mantelpiece,

his legs crossed, and one foot beating on the hearth-rug. The men were

ashamed, and they began to talk of indifferent things. Smoke? Didn't

mind. Those Indian cigars were good. Not bad, certainly.

At length Drake said in a different voice, “Cruel but necessary,

Robert--necessary to the woman who is going to be your wife, cruel to

the poor girl who has been.”

Lord Robert rose to his feet impatiently, stretched his arm, and shot

out his striped cuff and walked to and fro across the room.

“Pon my soul, I believe I should have stuck to the little thing but

for the old girl, don't you know. She's made such a good social running

lately--and then she's started this evangelical craze too. No, Polly

wouldn't have suited her book anyhow.”

Silence again, and then further talk on indifferent things.

“Wish Benson wouldn't sweep the soda water off the table.” “Ring for

it.” “The little thing really cares for me, don't you know. And it isn't

my fault, is it? I had to hedge. Frank, dear boy, you're always taunting

me with the treadmill we have to turn for the sake of society, and so

forth, but with debts about a man's neck like a millstone, what could

one do----”

“I don't mean that you're worse than others, old fellow, or that

sacrificing this one poor child is going to mend matters much----”

“No, it isn't likely to improve my style of going, is it?”

“But that man John Storm was not so far wrong, after all, and for

this polygamy of our 'lavender-glove tribe' the nation itself will be

overtaken by the judgment of God one of these days.”

Lord Robert broke into a peal of derisive laughter. “Go on,” he cried.

“Go on, dear boy! It's funny to hear you, though--after to-day's

proceedings too”; and he glanced significantly around the table.

Drake brought down his fist with a thump on to the mantelpiece. “Hold

your tongue, Robert! How often am I to tell you this is a different

thing entirely? Because I discover a creature of genius and try to help

her to the position she deserves----”

“You hypocrite, if it had been a man instead of a charming little woman

with big eyes, don't you know----”

But there had been a ring at the outer door, and Benson came in to say

that a clergyman was waiting downstairs.

“Little Golightly again!” said Lord Robert wearily. “Are these

everlasting arrangements never----”

The man stopped him. It was not Mr. Golightly; it was a stranger; would

not give his name; looked like a Catholic priest; had been there before,

he thought.

“Can it be---Talk of the devil----”

“Ask him up,” said Drake. And while Drake bit his lip and clinched his

hands, and Lord Robert took up a scent bottle and sprayed himself with

eau de cologne, they saw a man clad in the long coat of a priest come

into the room--calm, grave, self-possessed, very pale, with hollow and

shaven cheeks and dark and sunken eyes, which burned with a sombre fire,

and head so closely cropped as to seem to be almost bald.

John Storm's anger had cooled. As he crossed the park the heat of his

soul had turned to fear, and while he stood in the hall below, with an

atmosphere of perfume about him, and even a delicate sense of a feminine

presence, his fear had turned to terror. On that account he had refused

to send up his name, and on going up the staircase, lined with prints,

he had been tempted to turn about and fly lest he should come upon

Glory face to face. But finding only the two men in the room above, his

courage came back and he hated himself for his treacherous thought of

her.

“You will forgive me for this unceremonious visit, sir,” he said,

addressing himself to Drake.

Drake motioned to him to be seated. He bowed, but continued to stand.

“Your friend will remember that I have been here before.”

Lord Robert bent his head, and went on trifling with the spray.

“It was a painful errand relating to a girl who had been nurse at the

hospital. The girl was nothing to me, but she had a companion who was

very much.”

Drake nodded and his lips stiffened, but he did not speak.

“You are aware that since then I have been away from the hospital. I

wrote to you on the subject; you will remember that.”

“Well?” said Drake.

“I have only just returned, and have come direct from the hospital now.”

“Well?”

“I see you know what I mean, sir. My young friend has gone. Can you tell

me where to find her?”

“Sorry I can not,” said Drake coldly, and it stung him to see a look of

boundless relief cross the grave face in front of him.

“Then you don't know----”

“I didn't say that,” said Drake, and then the lines of pain came back.

“At the request of her people I brought her up to London. Naturally

they will look to me for news of her, and I feel responsible for her

welfare.”

“If that is so, you must pardon me for saying you've taken your duty

lightly,” said Drake.

John Storm gripped the rail of the chair in front of him, and there was

silence for a moment.

“Whatever I may have to blame myself with in the past, it would relieve

me to find her well and happy and safe from all harm.”

“She \_is\_ well and happy, and safe too--I can tell you that much.”

There was another moment of silence, and then John Storm said in broken

sentences and in a voice that was struggling to control itself: “I have

known her since she was a child, sir---You can not think how many tender

memories---It is nearly a year since I saw her, and one likes to see old

friends after an absence.”

Drake did not speak, but he dropped his head, for John's eyes had begun

to fill.

“We were good friends too. Boy and girl comrades almost. Brother and

sister, I should say, for that was how I liked to think of myself--her

elder brother bound to take care of her.”

There was a little trill of derisive laughter from the other side of

the room, where Lord Robert had put the spray down noisily and turned to

look out into the street. Then John Storm drew himself up and said in a

firm voice:

“Gentlemen, why should I mince matters? I will not do so. The girl we

speak of is more to me than anybody else in the world besides. Perhaps

she was one of the reasons why I went into that monastery. Certainly she

is the reason I have come out of it. I have come to find her. I \_shall\_

find her. If she is in difficulty or danger I intend to save her. Will

you tell me where she is?”

“Mr. Storm,” said Drake, “I am sorry, very sorry, but what you say

compels me to speak plainly. The lady is well and safe and happy. If her

friends are anxious about her she can reassure them for herself, and

no doubt she has already done so. But in the position she occupies at

present you are a dangerous man. It might not be her wish, and it would

not be to her advantage, to meet with you, and I can, not allow her to

run the risk.”

“Has it come to that? Have you a right to speak for her, sir?”

“Perhaps I have----” Drake hesitated, and then said with a rush, “the

right to protect her against a fanatic.”

John Storm curbed himself; he had been through a long schooling. “Man,

be honest,” he said. “Either your interest is good or bad, selfish or

unselfish. Which is it?”

Drake made no answer.

“But it would be useless to bandy words. I didn't come here to do that.

Will you tell me where she is?”

“No.”

“Then it is to be a duel between us--is that so? You for the girl's body

and I for her soul? Very well, I take your challenge.”

There was silence once more, and John Storm's eyes wandered about the

room. They fixed themselves at length on the sketch by the pier-glass.

“On my former visit I met with the same reception. The girl could take

care of herself. It was no business of mine. How that relation has ended

I do not ask. But this one----”

“This one is an entirely different matter,” said Drake, “and I will

thank you not to----”

But John Storm was making the sign of the cross on his breast, and

saying, as one who was uttering a prayer, “God grant it is and always

may be!”

At the next moment he was gone from the room. The two men stood where he

had left them until his footsteps had ceased on the stairs and the door

had closed behind him. Then Drake cried, “Benson--a telegraph form! I

must telegraph to Koenig at once.”

“Yes, he'll follow her up on the double quick,” said Lord Robert. “But

what matter? His face will be enough to frighten the girl. Ugh! It was

the face of a death's head!”

At dinner that night John Storm was more than usually silent. To break

in upon his gravity, Mrs. Callender asked him what he intended to do

next.

“To take priest's orders without delay,” he said.

“And what then?”

“Then,” he said, lifting a twitching and suffering face “to make an

attack on the one mighty stronghold of the devil's kingdom whereof woman

is the direct and immediate victim; to tell Society over again it is an

organized hypocrisy for the pursuit and demoralization of woman, and the

Church that bachelorhood is not celibacy, and polygamy is against

the laws of God; to look and search for the beaten and broken who lie

scattered and astray in our bewildered cities, and to protect them and

shelter them whatever they are, however low they have fallen, because

they are my sisters and I love them.”

“God bless ye, laddie! That's spoken like a man,” said the old woman,

rising from her seat.

But John Storm's pale face had already flushed up to the eyes, and he

dropped his head as one who was ashamed.

II.

At eight o'clock that night John Storm was walking through the streets

of Soho. The bell of a jam factory had just been rung, and a stream of

young girls in big hats with gorgeous flowers and sweeping feathers were

pouring out of an archway and going arm-in-arm down the pavement. Men

standing in groups at street ends shouted to them as they passed, and

they shouted back in shrill voices and laughed with wild joy. In an

alley round one corner an organ man was playing “Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay,”

and some of the girls began to dance and sing around him. Coming to the

main artery of traffic, they were almost run down by a splendid equipage

which was cutting across two thoroughfares into a square, and they

screamed with mock terror as the fat coachman in tippet and cockade

bellowed to them to get out of the way.

The square was a centre of gaiety. Theatres and music halls lined two of

its sides, and the gas on their facades and the beacons on their roofs

were beginning to burn brightly in the fading daylight. With skips and

leaps the girls passed over to the doors of these palaces, and peered

with greedy eyes through lines of policemen and doorkeepers in livery at

gentlemen, in shields of shirt-front and ladies in light cloaks and long

white gloves stepping out of gorgeous carriages into gorgeous halls.

John Storm was looking on at this masquerade when suddenly he became

aware that the flare of coarse lights on the front of the building

before him formed the letters of a word. The word was “GLORIA.” Seeing

it again as he had seen it in the morning, but now identified and

explained, he grew hot and cold by turns, and his brain, which refused

to think, felt like a sail that is flapping idly on the edge of the

wind.

There was a garden in the middle of the square, and he walked round and

round it. He gazed vacantly at a statue in the middle of the garden, and

then walked round the rails again. The darkness was gathering fast, the

gas was beginning to blaze, and he was like a creature in the coil of a

horrible fascination. That word, that name over the music hall, fizzing

and crackling in its hundred lights, seemed to hold him as by an eye of

fire. And remembering what had happened since he left the monastery--the

sandwich men, the boards on the omnibuses, the hoardings on the

walls--it seemed like a fiery finger which had led him to that spot.

Only one thing was clear--that a supernatural power had brought him

there, and that it was intended he should come. Fearfully, shamefully,

miserably, rebuking himself for his doubts, yet conquered and compelled

by them, he crossed the street and entered the music hall.

He was in the pit and it was crowded; not a seat vacant anywhere, and

many persons standing packed in the crush-room at the back. His first

sensation was of being stared at. First the man at the pay-box and then

the check-taker had looked at him, and now he was being looked at by

the people about him. They were both men and girls. Some of the men wore

light frock-coats and talked in the slang of the race-course, some of

the girls wore noticeable hats and showy flowers in their bosoms and

were laughing in loud voices. They made a way for him of themselves, and

he passed through to a wooden barrier that ran round the last of the pit

seats.

The music hall was large, and to John Storm's eyes, straight from the

poverty of his cell, it seemed garish in the red and gold of its Eastern

decorations. Men in the pit seats were smoking pipes and cigarettes, and

waiters with trays were hurrying up and down the aisles serving ale and

porter, which they set down on ledges like the book-rests in church. In

the stalls in front, which were not so full, gentlemen in evening dress

were smoking cigars, and there was an arc of the tier above, in which

people in fashionable costumes were talking audibly. Higher yet, and

unseen from that position, there was a larger audience still, whose

voices rumbled like a distant sea. A cloud of smoke filled the

atmosphere, and from time to time there was the sound of popping corks

and breaking glasses and rolling bottles.

The curtain was down, but the orchestra was beginning to play. Two men

in livery came from the sides of the curtain and fixed up large figures

in picture frames that were attached to the wings of the proscenium.

Then the curtain rose and the entertainment was resumed. It was in

sections, and after each performance the curtain was dropped and the

waiters went round with their trays again.

John Storm had seen it all before in the days when, under his father's

guidance, he had seen everything--the juggler, the acrobat, the

step-dancer, the comic singer, the tableaus, and the living picture. He

felt tired and ashamed, yet, he could not bring himself to go away. As

the evening advanced he thought: “How foolish! What madness it was to

think of such a thing!” He was easier after that, and began to listen to

the talk of the people about him. It was free, but not offensive. In the

frequent intervals some of the men played with the girls, pushing and

nudging and joking with them, and the girls laughed and answered back.

Occasionally one of them would turn her head aside and look into John's

face with a saucy smile. “God forbid that I should grudge them their

pleasure!” he thought. “It's all they have, poor creatures!”

But the audience grew noisier as the evening went on. They called to

the singers, made inarticulate squeals, and then laughed at their own

humour. A lady sang a comic song. It described her attempt to climb to

the top of an omnibus on a windy day. John turned to look at the faces

behind him, and every face was red and hot, and grinning and grimacing.

He was still half buried in the monastery he had left that morning, and

he thought: “Such are the nightly pleasures of our people. To-night,

to-morrow night, the night after! O my country, my country!”

He was awakened from these thoughts by an outburst of applause. The

curtain was down and nothing was going on except the putting up of a

new figure in the frames. The figure was 8. Some one behind him said,

“That's her number!” “The new artiste?” said another voice. “Gloria,”

said the first.

John Storm's head began to swim. He looked back--he was in a solid

block of people. “After all, what reasons have I?” he thought, and he

determined to stand his ground.

More applause. Another leader of the orchestra had appeared. \_Bâton\_ in

hand, he was bowing from his place before the footlights. It was Koenig,

the organist, and John Storm shuddered in the darkest corner of his

soul.

The stalls had filled up unawares to him, and a party was now coming

into a private box which had hitherto been empty. The late-comers were

Drake and Lord Robert Ure, and a lady with short hair brushed back from

her forehead.

John Storm felt the place going round him, yet he steadied and braced

himself. “But this is the natural atmosphere of such people,” he

thought. He tried to find satisfaction in the thought that Glory was not

with them. Perhaps they had exaggerated their intimacy with her.

The band began to play. It was music for the entrance of a new

performer. The audience became quiet; there was a keen, eager, expectant

air; and then the curtain went up. John Storm felt dizzy. If he could

have escaped he would have turned and fled. He gripped with both hands

the rail in front of him.

Then a woman came gliding on to the stage. She was a tall girl in a dark

dress and long black gloves, with red hair, and a head like a rose. It

was Glory! A cloud came over John Storm's eyes, and for a few moments he

saw no more.

There was some applause from the pit and the regions overhead. The

people in the stalls were waving their handkerchiefs, and the lady in

the box was kissing her hand. Glory was smiling, quite at her ease,

apparently not at all nervous, only a little shy and with her hands

interlaced in front of her. Then there was silence again and she began

to sing.

It is the moment when prayers go up from the heart not used to pray.

Strange contradiction! John Storm found himself praying that Glory

might do well, that she might succeed and eclipse everything! But he

had turned his eyes away, and the sound of her voice was even more

afflicting than the sight of her face. It was nearly a year since he had

heard it last, and now he was hearing it under these conditions, in

a place like this! He must have been making noises by his breathing.

“Hush! hush!” said the people about him, and somebody tapped him on the

shoulder.

After a moment he regained control of himself, and he lifted his head

and listened. Glory's voice, which had been quavering at first, gathered

strength. She was singing Mylecharaine, and the wild, plaintive harmony

of the old Manx ballad was floating in the air like the sound of the

sea. After her first lines a murmur of approval went round, the people

sat up and leaned forward, and then there was silence again--dead

silence--and then loud applause.

But it was only with the second verse that the humour of her song began,

and John Storm waited for it with a trembling heart. He had heard her

sing it a hundred times in the old days, and she was singing it now as

she had sung it before. There were the same tricks of voice, the same

tricks of gesture, the same expressions, the same grimaces. Everything

was the same, and yet everything was changed. He knew it. He was sure it

must be so. So artless and innocent then, now so subtle and significant!

Where was the difference? The difference was in the place, in the

people. John Storm could have found it in his heart to turn on the

audience and insult them. Foul-minded creatures, laughing, screaming,

squealing, punctuating their own base interpretations and making evil of

what was harmless! How he hated the grinning faces round about him!

When the song was finished Glory swept a gay courtesy, lifted her

skirts, and tripped off the stage. Then there were shouting, whistling,

stamping, and deafening applause. The whole house was unanimous for

an encore, and she came back smiling and bowing with a certain look of

elation and pride. John Storm was becoming terrified by his own anger.

“Be quiet there!” said some one behind him. “Who's the josser?” said

somebody else, and then he heard Glory's voice again.

It was another Manx ditty. A crew of young fishermen are going ashore on

Saturday night after their week on the sea after the herring. They go up

to the inn; their sweethearts meet them there; they drink and sing. At

length they are so overcome by liquor and love that they have to be put

to bed in their big sea boots. Then the girls kiss them and leave them.

The singer imitated the kissing, and the delighted audience repeated the

sound. Sounds of kissing came from all parts of the hall, mingled

with loud acclamations of laughter. The singer smiled and kissed back.

Somehow she conveyed the sense of a confidential feeling as if she were

doing it for each separate person in the audience, and each person had

an impulse to respond. It was irresistible, it was maddening, it swept

over the whole house.

John Storm felt sick in his very soul. Glory knew well what she was

doing. She knew what these people wanted. His Glory! Glory of the old,

innocent happy days! O God! O God! If he could only get out! But that

was impossible. Behind him the dense mass was denser than ever, and he

was tightly wedged in by a wall of faces--hot, eager, with open mouths,

teeth showing, and glittering and dancing eyes. He tried not to listen

to what the people about were saying, yet he could not help but hear.

“Tasty, ain't she?” “Cerulean, eh?” “Bit 'ot, certinly!” “Well, if I

was a Johnny, and had got the oof, she'd have a brougham and a sealskin

to-morrow.” “To-night, you mean,” and then there were significant

squeaks and trills of laughter.

They called her back again, and yet again, and she returned with

unaffected cheerfulness and a certain look of triumph. At one moment she

was doing the gaiety of youth, and at the next the crabbedness of age;

now the undeveloped femininity of the young girl, then the volubility

of the old woman. But John Storm was trying to hear none of it. With his

head in his breast and his eyes down he was struggling to think of the

monastery, and to imagine that he was still buried in his cell. It was

only this morning that he left it, yet it seemed to be a hundred years

ago. Last night the Brotherhood, the singing of Evensong, Compline, the

pure air, silence, solitude, and the atmosphere of prayer; and to-night

the crowds, the clouds of smoke, the odour of drink, the meaning

laughter, and Glory as the centre of it all!

For a moment everything was blotted out, and then there was loud

hand-clapping and cries of “Bravo!” He lifted his head. Glory had

finished and was bowing herself off. The lady in the private box flung

her a bouquet of damask roses. She picked it up and kissed it, and bowed

to the box, and then the acclamations of applause were renewed.

The crush behind relaxed a little, and he began to elbow his way out.

People were rising or stirring everywhere, and the house was emptying

fast. As the audience surged down the corridors to the doors they talked

and laughed and made inarticulate sounds. “A tricky bit o' muslin, eh?”

“Yus, she's thick.” “She's my dart, anyhow.” Then the whistling of a

tune. It was the chorus of Mylecharaine. John Storm felt the cool air of

the street on his hot face at last. The policemen were keeping a way

for the people coming from the stalls, the doorkeepers were whistling

or shouting for cabs, and their cries were being caught up by the match

boys, who were running in and out like dogs among the carriage wheels

and the horses' feet. “En-sim!” “Four-wheel-er!”

In a narrow court at the back, dimly lit and not much frequented, there

was a small open door under a lamp suspended from a high blank wall.

This was the stage-door of the music hall, and a group of young men,

looking like hairdressers' assistants, blocked the pavement at either

side of it. “Wonder what she's like off?” “Like a laidy, you bet.” “Yus,

but none o' yer bloomin' hamatoors.” “Gawd, here's the josser again!”

John Storm pushed his way through to where a commissionaire sat behind a

glass partition in a little room walled with pigeon holes.

“Can I see Miss Quayle?” he asked.

The porter looked blank.

“Gloria, then,” said John Storm, with an effort.

The porter looked at him suspiciously. Had he an appointment? No; but

could he send in his name? The porter looked doubtful. Would she come

out soon? The porter did not know. Would she come this way? The porter

could not tell. Could he have her address?

“If ye want to write to the laidy, write here,” said the porter, with a

motion of his hands to the pigeon-holes.

John Storm felt humiliated and ashamed. The hairdressers' assistants

were grinning at him. He went out, feeling that Glory was farther than

ever from him now, and if he met her they might not speak. But he could

not drag himself away. In the darkness under a lamp at the other side of

the street he stood and waited. Shoddy broughams drove up, with drivers

in shabby livery, bringing “turns” in wonderful hats and overcoats, over

impossible wigs, whiskers, and noses--niggers, acrobats, clowns, and

comic singers, who stepped out, shook the straw of their carriage

carpets off their legs, and passed in at the stage entrance.

At length the commissionaire appeared at the door and whistled, and a

hansom cab rattled up to the end of the court. Then a lady muffled in

a cape, with the hood drawn over her head, and carrying a bouquet of

roses, came out leaning on the arm of a gentleman. She stood a moment by

his side and spoke to him and laughed. John heard her laughter. At the

next moment she had stepped into the hansom, the door had fallen to,

the driver had turned, the gentleman had raised his hat, the light had

fallen on the lady's face, and she was leaning forward and smiling. John

saw her smiles.

At the next moment the hansom had passed into the illuminated

thoroughfares and the group of people had dispersed. John Storm was

alone under the lamp in the little dark street, and somewhere in

the dark alleys behind him the organ man was still grinding out

“Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay.”

“Weel, what luck on your first night out?” said Mrs. Callender at

breakfast in the morning. “Found any of the poor lost things yet?”

“One,” said John, with a rueful face. “Lost enough, though she doesn't

know it yet, God help her!”

“They never do at first, laddie. Write to her friends, if she has any.”

“Her friends?”

“Nothing like home influences, ye ken.”

“I will--I must! It's all I can do now.”

III.

“The Priory, Friday Morning.

“Oh, my dear aunties, don't be terrified, but Glory has had a kind of

a wee big triumph! Nothing very awful, you know, but on Monday night,

before a rather larger company than usual, she sang and recited and

play-acted a little, and as a result all the earth--the London earth--is

talking about her, and nobody is taking any notice of the rest of

the world. Every post is bringing me flowers with ribbons and cards

attached, or illustrated weeklies with my picture and my life in little,

and I find it's wonderful what a lot of things you may learn about

yourself if you'll only read the papers. My room at this moment is

like a florist's window at nine o'clock on Saturday morning, and I have

reason to suspect that mine host and teacher, Carl Koenig, F. E. C. O.,

exhibits them to admiring neighbours when I am out. The voice of that

dear old turtle has ever since Monday been heard in the land, and

besides telling me about Poland day and night from all the subterranean

passages of the house, he has taken to waiting on me like a nigger,

and ordering soups and jellies for me as if I had suddenly become an

invalid. Of course, I am an able-bodied woman just the same as ever, but

my nerves have been on the rack all the week, and I feel exactly as I

did long ago at Peel when I was a little naughty minx and got up into

the tower of the old church and began pulling at the bell rope, you

remember. Oh, dear! oh, dear! My frantic terror at the noise of the

big bells and the vibration of the shaky old walls! Once I had begun

I couldn't leave off for my life, but went on tugging and tugging and

quaking and quaking until--have you forgotten it?--all the people came

running helter-skelter under the impression that the town was afire. And

then, behold, it was only little me, trembling like a leaf and crying

like a ninny! I remember I was scolded and smacked and dismissed into

outer darkness (it was the chip vault, I think), for that first outbreak

of fame, and now, lest you should want to mete out the same punishment

to me again--

“Aunt Anna, I'm knitting the sweetest little shawl for you, dear--blue

and white, to suit your complexion--being engaged in the evening only,

and most of the day sole mistress of my own will and pleasure. How

charming of me, isn't it? But I'm afraid it isn't, because you'll see

through me like a colander, for I want to tell you something which I

have kept back too long, and when I think of it I grow old and wrinkled

like a Christmas apple. So you must be a pair of absolute old angels,

aunties, and break the news to grandfather.

“You know I told you, Aunt Rachel, to say something for me at nine

o'clock on the Queen's birthday. And you remember that Mr. Drake used

to think pearls and diamonds of Glory, and predict wonderful things for

her. Then you don't forget that Mr. Drake had a friend named Lord Robert

Ure, commonly called Lord Bob. Well, you see, by Mr. Drake's advice, and

Lord Bobbie's influence and agency, and I don't know what, I have

made one more change--it's to be the last, dears, the very last--in my

Wandering-Jew existence, and now I am no longer a society entertainer,

because I am a music-hall art----”

Glory had written so far when she dropped the pen and rose from the

table, wiping her eyes.

“My poor child, you can't tell them, it's impossible; they would never

forgive you!”

Then a carriage stopped before the house, the garden bell was rung, and

the maid came into the room with a lady's card. It was inscribed “Miss

Polly Love,” with many splashes and flourishes.

“Ask her up,” said Glory. And then Polly came rustling up the stairs in

a silver-gray silk dress and a noticeable hat, and with a pug-dog tucked

under her arm. She looked older and less beautiful. The pink and ivory

of her cheeks was coated with powder, and her light gray eyes were

pencilled. There was the same blemished appearance as before, and the

crack in the vase was now plainly visible.

Glory had met the girl only once since they parted after the hospital,

but Polly kissed her effusively. Then she sat down and began to cry.

“Perhaps you wouldn't think it, my dear, but I'm the most miserable girl

in London. Haven't you heard about it? I thought everybody knew. Robert

is going to be married. Yes, indeed, to-morrow morning to that American

heiress, and I hadn't an idea of it until Monday afternoon. That was

the day of your luncheon, dear, and I felt sure something was going to

happen, because I broke my looking-glass dressing to go out. Robert took

me home, and he began to play the piano, and I could see he was going

to say something. 'Do you know, little woman, I'm to be married on

Saturday?' I wonder I didn't drop, but I didn't, and he went on playing.

But it was no use trying, and I burst out and ran into my room. After a

minute I heard him coming in, but he didn't lift me up as he used to do.

Only talked to me over my back, telling me to control myself, and what

he was going to do for me, and so on. He used to say a few tears made me

nicer looking, but it was no good crying--and then he went away.”

She began to cry again, and the dog in her lap began to howl.

“O God! I don't know what I've done to be so unfortunate. I've not been

flash at all, and I never went to \_cafés\_ at night, or to Sally's or

Kate's, as so many girls do, and he can't say I ever took notice of

anybody else. When I love anybody I think of him last thing at night and

first thing in the morning, and now to be left alone--I'm sure I shall

never live through it!”

Glory tried to comfort the poor broken creature. It was her duty to

live. There was her child--had she never even seen it since she parted

with it to Mrs. Jupe? It must be such a darling by this time, creeping

about and talking a little, wherever it was. She ought to have the child

to live with her, it would be such company.

Polly kissed the pug to stop its whining, and said: “I don't want

company. Life isn't the same thing to me now. He thinks because he is

marrying that woman--What better is she than me, I would like to know?

She's only snapping at him for what he is, and he is only taking her

for what she's got, and I've a great mind to go to All Saints' and shame

them. You wouldn't? Well, it's hard to hide one's feelings, but it would

serve them right if--if I did it.”

Polly had risen with a wild look, and was pressing the pug so hard that

it was howling again.

“Did what?” said Glory.

“Nothing--that is to say----”

“You mustn't dream of going to the church. The police----”

“Oh, it isn't the police I'm afraid of,” said Polly, tossing her head.

“What then?”

“Never mind, my dear,” said Polly.

On the way downstairs she reproached herself for not seeing what was

coming. “But girls like us never do, now do we?”

Glory coloured up to her hair, but made no protest. At the gate Polly

wiped her eyes and drew down her veil, and said: “I'm sorry to say it

to your face, my dear, but it's all been that Mr. Drake's doings, and

a girl ought to know he'd do as much himself, and worse. But you're

a great woman now, and in everybody's mouth, so you needn't care.

Only----”

Glory's face was scarlet and her under lip was bleeding. Yet she kissed

the poor shallow thing at parting, because she was down, and did not

understand, and lived in another world entirely. But going back to where

her letter lay unfinished she thought: “Impossible! If this girl, living

in an atmosphere so different, thinks that----” Then she sat at the

table and forced herself to tell all.

She had got through the red riot of her confession and was writing: “I

don't know what he would think of it, but do you know I thought I saw

his face on Wednesday night. It was in the dark, and I was in a cab

driving away from the stage door. But so changed! oh, so changed! It

must have been a dream, and it was the same as if his ghost had passed

me.”

Then she became aware of voices in dispute downstairs. First a man's

voice, then the voices of two men--one of them Koenig's, the other with

a haunting ring in it. She got up from the table and went to the door of

her room, going on tip-toe, yet hardly knowing why. Koenig was saying:

“No, sair, de lady does not lif here.” Then a deep, strong chest-voice

answered, “Mr. Koenig, surely you remember me?” and Glory's heart seemed

to beat like a watch. “No-o, sair. Are you--Oh, yes; what am I thinking

of?--But de lady----”

“Mr. Koenig,” Glory called, cried, gasped over the stair-rail, “ask the

gentleman to come up, please.”

She hardly knew what happened next, only that Koenig seemed to be

muttering confused explanations below, and that she was back in her

sitting-room giving a glance into the looking-glass and doing something

with her hair. Then there was a step on the stairs, on the landing, at

the threshold, and she fell back a few paces from the door, that she

might see him as he came in. He knocked. Her heart was beating so

violently that she had to keep her hand over it. “Who's there?”

“It is I.”

“Who's I?”

Then she saw him coming down on her, and the very sunlight seemed to

wave like the shadows on a ship. He was paler and thinner, his great

eyes looked weary though they smiled, his hand felt bony though firm,

and his head was closely cropped.

She looked at him for a moment without speaking and with a sensation of

fulness at her heart that was almost choking her.

“Is it you? I didn't know it was you--I was just thinking----” She was

talking at random, and was out of breath as if she had been running.

“Glory, I have frightened you!”

“Frightened? Oh, no! Why should you think so? Perhaps I am crying, but

then I'm always doing that nowadays. And, besides, you are so----”

“Yes, I am altered,” he said in the pause that followed.

“And I?”

“You are altered too.” He was looking at her with an earnest and

passionate gaze. It was she--herself--Glory--not merely a vision or a

dream. Again he recognised the glorious eyes with their brilliant lashes

and the flashing spot in one of them that had so often set his heart

beating. She looked back at him and thought, “How ill he must have

been!” and then a lump came into her throat and she began to laugh that

she might not have to cry, and broke out into broad Manx lest he should

hear the tremor in her voice:

“But you're coming too, aren't ye? And you've left that theer--Aw, it's

glad ter'ble I am, as our people say, and it's longin' mortal you'd be

for all, boy.”

Another trill of nervous laughter, and then a burst of earnest English:

“But tell me, you've come for good--you are not going back to----”

“No, I am not going back to the Brotherhood, Glory.” How friendly his

low voice sounded!

“And you?”

“Well, I've left the hospital, you see.”

“Yes, I see,” he said. His weary eyes were wandering about the room, and

for the first time she felt ashamed of its luxuries and its flowers.

“But how did you find me?”

“I went to the hospital first----”

“So you hadn't forgotten me? Do you know I thought you had quite--But

tell me at once, where did you go then?”

He was silent for a moment, and she said, “Well?”

“Then I went to Mr. Drake's chambers.”

“I don't know why everybody should think that Mr. Drake----”

His great eyes were fixed on her face and his mouth was quivering, and,

to prevent him from speaking, she put on a look of forced gaiety and

said, “But how did you light on me at last?”

“I meant to find you, Glory, if I tramped all London over and

everybody denied you to me”--the lump in her throat was hurting her

dreadfully--“but I chanced to see the name over the music hall.”

She saw it coming, and broke into laughter. “The music hall! Only think!

You looking at music halls!”

“I was there on Monday night.”

“You? Monday? Then perhaps it was not my fancy that I saw you by the

stage do--.” Her nerves were getting more and more excited, and to calm

them she crossed her arms above her head. “So they gave you my address

at the stage door, did they?”

“No, I wrote for it to Peel.”

“Peel?” She caught her breath, and her arms came down. “Then perhaps

you told them where----” “I told them nothing, Glory.” She looked at him

through her eyelashes, her head held down.

“Not that it matters, you know.”

“I've just been writing to them, and they'll soon--But, oh, I've so much

to say, and I can't say it here. Couldn't we go somewhere? Into the park

or on to the heath, or farther--much farther--the room is so small, and

I feel as if I've been suffocating for want of air.”

“I've something to say too, and if----”

“Then let it be to-morrow morning, and we'll start early, and you'll

bring me back in time for the theatre. Say Paddington Station, at

eleven--will that do?”

“Yes.”

She saw him to the gate, and when he was going she wanted him to kiss

her hand, so she pretended to do the high handshake, but he only held it

for a moment and looked steadily into her eyes. The sunshine was pouring

into the garden, and she was bareheaded. Her hair was coiled up, and she

was wearing a light morning blouse. He thought she had never looked so

beautiful. On getting into the omnibus at the end of the street he took

a letter out of his vest pocket, and, being alone, he first carried it

to his lips, then reopened and read it:

“See her at once, dear John, and keep in touch with her, and I shall be

happy and relieved. As for your father, that old Chaise is going crazy

and is sending Lord Storm crazy too. He has actually discovered that the

dust the witch walks on who has cast the evil eye on you lies in

front of Glenfaba gate, and he has been sweeping it up o' nights and

scattering it in front of Knockaloe! What simplicity! There are only two

women here. Does the silly old gawk mean Rachel? or is it, perhaps, Aunt

Anna?”

And while the omnibus joggled down the street, and the pale young

clergyman with the great weary eyes was poring over his letter, Glory

was sitting at her table and writing with flying fingers and a look of

enthusiastic ecstasy:

“I've had three bites at this cherry. But who do you think has just

been here? John!--John Storm! But then you know that he is back, and it

wasn't merely my fancy that I saw him by the stage door. It seems as if

people have been denying me to him, and he has been waiting for me and

watching over me.” (Blot.) “His voice is so low, but I suppose that

comes to people who are much alone, and he is so thin and so pale, and

his eyes are so large, and they have that deep look that cuts into the

heart. He knew he was changed, and I think he was ashamed” (blot), “but

of course I didn't let whit that I was taking notice, and I'm so happy

for his sake, poor fellow! that he has escaped from his cage in that

Salvation zoo that I know I shall make them split their sides in the

theatre to-night.” (Blot, blot.) “How tiresome! This ink must have

got water in it somehow, and then my handwriting is such a

hop-skip-and-a-jump anyway. But hoots!

“Why shouldn't I love Johnny,

“And why shouldn't Johnny love me?

“Glory.”

IV.

It was a beautiful May morning, and standing by the Paddington Station

with the dog at his feet, he felt her approach instinctively as she came

toward him with her free step in her white cambric dress under the light

parasol fringed with lace. Her face was glowing with the fresh air, and

she looked happy and bright. As they walked into the station she

poured out a stream of questions about the dog, took possession of him

straightway, and concluded to call him Don.

They agreed to spend the day at Burnham Beeches, and while he went

for the tickets she stepped on to the platform. It was Saturday, the

bookstall was ablaze with the picture papers, and one of them was

prominently displayed at a page containing her own portrait. She wanted

John to see this, so she invented an excuse for bringing him face to

face with it, and then she laughed and he bought the paper.

The clerk recognised her--they could see that by the smile he kept in

reserve--and a group of officers in the Guards, in flannels and straw

hats, going down to their club at Maidenhead, looked at her and nudged

each other as if they knew who she was. Her eyes danced, her lips

smiled, and she was proud that John should see the first fruits of her

fame. She was proud of him, too, with his bold walk and strong carriage,

as they passed the officers in their negligent dress, with their red and

blue neckties. But John's heart was aching, and he was wondering how he

was to begin on the duty he had to do.

From the moment they started she gave herself up to the delights of

their holiday, and even the groaning and cranking and joggling of

the train amused her. When the Guards had got into their first-class

carriage they had glanced at the open window where her brilliant eyes

and rosy lips were gleaming behind a veil. John gazed at her with his

slow and tender looks, and felt guilty and ashamed.

They left the train at Slough, and a wave of freshness, with an odour of

verdure and sap, blew into their faces. The dog leaped and barked, and

Glory skipped along with it, breaking every moment into enthusiastic

exclamations. There was hardly any wind, and the clouds, which were very

high overhead, were scarcely moving. It was a glorious day, and Glory's

face wore an expression of perfect happiness.

They lunched at the old hotel in the town, with the window open, and

the swallows darting in the air outside, and Glory, who took milk “for

remembrance,” rose and said, “I looks toward Mr. Storm,” and then drank

his health and swept him the prettiest courtesy. All through lunch she

kept feeding the dog from her own fingers, and at the end rebuked him

for spreading his bones in a half circle across the carpet, a thing

which was never done, she said, in the best society, this side the

Cannibal Islands.

“By-and-bye,” he thought, “time enough by-and-bye,” for the charm of her

joy was infectious.

The sun was high when they started on their walk, and her face looked

flushed and warm. But through the park-like district to the wood she

raced with Don, and made him leap over her sunshade and roll over

and over on the bright green grass. The larks were trilling overhead,

everything was humming and singing.

“Let her have one happy day,” he thought, and they began to call and

shout to each other.

Then they came to the beeches, and, being sheltered from the fiery rays

of the sun, she put down her sunshade and John took off his hat. The

silence and gloom, the great gnarled trees, with their thews and sinews,

their arms and thighs and loins, the gentle rustle of the breeze in the

branches overhead, the deep accumulation of dead leaves underfoot, the

fluttering of wings, the low cooing of pigeons, and all the mystery

and wonder of the wood, brought a sense of awe, as on entering a mighty

minster in the dusk. But this wore away presently, and Glory began to

sing. Her pure voice echoed in the fragrant air, and the happiness so

long pent up and starved seemed to bubble in every word and note.

“Isn't this better than singing in music halls?” he thought, and then

he began to sing too, just like any happy boy, without thinking of

yesterday or to-morrow, of before or after. She smiled at him. He smiled

back. It was like a dream. After his long seclusion it was difficult to

believe it could be true. The open air, the perfume of the leaves they

were wading through, the silver bark of the birches and the blue peeps

of the sky between, and then Glory walking with her graceful motion,

and laughing and singing by his side! “I shall wake up in a minute,” he

thought, “I'm sure I shall!”

They sang one song together. It was Lasses and Lads, and to make

themselves think it was the old time back again they took each other's

hands and swung them to the tune. He felt her clasp like milk coursing

through his body, and a great wave of tenderness swept up his hard

resolve as sea-wrack is thrown up after a storm. “She is here; we are

together; why trouble about anything more?” and the time flew by.

But their voices went wrong immediately, and they were soon in

difficulties. Then she laughed, and they began again; but they could

not keep together, and as often as they tried they failed. “Ah, it's not

like the old days!” he thought, and a mood of sadness came over him.

He had begun to observe in Glory the trace of the life she had passed

through--words, phrases, ideas, snatches of slang, touches of moods

which had the note of a slight vulgarity. When the dog took a bone

uninvited she cried: “It's a click; you've sneaked it”; when John broke

down in the singing she told him to “chuck it off the chest”; and when

he stopped altogether she called him glum, and said she would “do it on

her own.”

“Why does he look so sorrowful?” she thought, and telling herself that

this came to people who were much alone, she rattled on more recklessly

than before.

She talked of the life of the music hall, the life at “the back,”

glorifying it by a tone of apology. It was all hurry-scurry, slap, dash,

and drive; no time to consider effects; a succession of last acts and

first nights; so it was really harder to be a music-hall woman than

a regular actress. And the music-hall woman was no worse than other

women--considering. Had he seen their ballet? It was fetching. Such

pages! Simply darlings! \_They\_ were the proud young birds of paradise

whom toffs like those Guards came to see, and it was fun to see them

pluming and preening themselves at the back, each for the eyes of her

own particular lord in the stalls. Thus she flung out unfamiliar notes,

hardly knowing their purport, but to John they were as slimy creatures

out of the social mire she had struggled through. O London! London! Its

shadow was over them even there, and go where they would, they could

never escape from it.

His former thought began to hang about him again, and he asked her to

tell him what had happened to her during his absence.

“Shall I?” she said. “Well, I brought three golden sovereigns out of the

hospital to distribute among the people of London, but, bless you, they

went nowhere.”

“And what then?”

“Then--then Hope was a good breakfast but a bad supper, you know. But

shall I tell you all? Yes, yes, I will.”

She told him of Mrs. Jupe, and of the deception she had practised upon

her people, and he turned his head that he might not see her tears. She

told him of the “Three Graces,” and of the stage manager--she called him

the “stage damager”--and then \_she\_ turned her head that she might hide

her shame. She told him of Josephs, the bogus agent, and his face grew

hard and his brown eyes looked black.

“And where did you say his place was?” he asked in a voice that vibrated

and broke.

“I didn't say,” she answered with a laugh and a tear.

She told him of Aggie, and of the foreign clubs, and of Koenig, and of

the dinner party at the Home Secretary's, and then she skipped a step

and cried:

“Ding, dong, dended,

My tale's ended.”

“And was it there you met Mr. Drake again?”

She replied with a nod.

“Never having seen him in the meantime?”

She pursed her lips and shook her head. “That's all over now, and what

matter? I likes to be jolly and I allwis is!”

“But is it all over?” he said, and he looked at her again with the deep

look that had cut into her heart.

“He's going to say something,” she thought, and she began to laugh,

but with a faint tremor, and giving the dog her parasol to carry in his

mouth, she took off her hat, swung it in her hand by the brim, and set

off to run.

There was the light shimmer of a pool at a level below, where the water

had drained to a bottom and was inclosed by beeches. The trees seemed

to hang over it with outstretched wings, like birds about to alight, and

round its banks there were plots of violets which filled the air with

their fragrance. It was a God-blest bit of ground, and when he came up

with her she was standing at the edge of the marshy mere panting and on

the point of tears, and saying, in a whisper, “Oh, how beautiful!”

“But however am I to get across?” she cried, looking with mock terror on

the two inches of water that barely covered the grass, and at the pretty

red shoes that peeped from under her dress.

Then something extraordinary occurred. She hardly knew what was

happening until it was over. Without a word, without a smile, he lifted

her up in his arms and carried her to the other side. She felt helpless

like a child, as if suddenly she belonged to herself no longer. Her head

had fallen on his shoulder and her heart was beating against his breast.

Or was it \_his\_ heart that was beating? When he put her down she was

afraid she was going to cry, so she began to laugh and to say they

mustn't lose that 7.30 to London or the “rag” would be rolling up

without her and the “stage damager” would be using “cuss words.”

They had to pass the old church of Stoke Pogis on the way back to the

town, and after looking at its timber belfry and steeple John suggested

that they should see the inside. The sexton was found working in the

garden at the side of the house, and he went indoors for the keys. “Here

they be, sir, and you being a pa'son I'll bide in the orchet. You and

your young missus can look at the church without me. 'A b'lieve 'a hev

seed it afore,” he said with a twinkle.

The church was dark and cool. There was a window representing an

angel ascending to heaven against a deep blue sky, and a squire's pew

furnished like a box at the theatre, with a carpet and even a stove. The

chairs in the front bore family crests, and behind them were inferior

chairs, without crests, for the servants. John had opened the little

modern organ and begun to play. After a while he began to sing. He sang

Nazareth, and his voice filled the empty church and went up into the

gloom of the roof, and echoed and returned, and it was almost as if

another voice were singing there.

Glory stood by his side and listened; a wonderful peace had come down

on her. Then the emotion that vibrated in his deep voice made something

surge up to her throat. “Life for evermore! Life for evermore!” All

at once she began to weep, to sob, and to laugh in a breath, and he

stopped.

“How ridiculous I am to-day! You'll think me a maniac,” she said. But

he only took her hand as if she had been a child and led her out of the

church.

Insensibly the day had passed into evening, and the horizontal rays of

the sun were dazzling their eyes as they returned to the hotel for tea.

In giving orders for this meal they had left the illustrated weekly

behind, and it was now clear from the easy smiles that greeted them that

the paper had been looked at and Glory identified. The room was ready,

with the table laid, the window closed, and a fire of wood in the dog

grate, for the chill of the evening was beginning to be felt. And to

make him forget what had happened at the church she put on a look of

forced gaiety and talked rapidly, frivolously, and at random. The

fresh air had given her such a colour that they would 'fairly eat her

to-night.' How tired she was, though! But a cup of tea would exhilarate

her “like a Johnnie's first whisky and soda in bed.”

He looked at her with his grave face; every word was cutting him like a

knife. “So you didn't tell the old folks at Glenfaba about the hospital

until later?”

“No. Have a cup of the 'girl'? They call champagne 'the boy' at 'the

back,' so I call tea 'the girl,' you know.”

“And when did you tell them about the music hall?”

“Yesterday. 'Muffins?'” and as she held out the plate she waggled the

wrist of her other hand, and mimicked the cry of the muffin man.

“Not until yesterday?”

She began to excuse herself. What was the use of taking people by

surprise? And then good people were sometimes so easily shocked!

Education and upbringing, and prejudices and even blood----

“Glory,” he said, “if you are ashamed of this life, believe me it is not

a right one.”

“Ashamed? Why should I be ashamed? Everybody is saying how proud I

should be.”

She spoke feverishly, and by a sudden impulse she plucked up the paper,

but as suddenly let it drop again, for, looking at his grave face,

her little fame seemed to shrivel up. “But give a dog a bad name

you know----You were there on Monday night. Did you see anything,

now--anything in the performance----”

“I saw the audience, Glory; that was enough for me. It is impossible for

a girl to live long in an atmosphere like that and be a good woman. Yes,

my child, impossible' God forbid that I should sit in judgment on any

man, still less on any woman!--but the women of the music hall, do they

remain good women? Poor souls, they are placed in a position so false

that it would require extraordinary virtue not to become false along

with it! And the whiter the soul that is dragged through that--that

mire, the more the defilement. The audiences at such places don't want

the white soul, they don't want the good woman, they want the woman who

has tasted of the tree of good and evil. You can see it in their faces,

and hear it in their laughter, and measure it in their applause. Oh, I'm

only a priest, but I've seen these places all the world over, and I know

what I'm saying, and I know it's true and you know it's true, Glory----”

Glory leaped up from the table and her eyes seemed to emit fire. “I know

it's hard and cruel and pitiless, and, since you were there on Monday

and saw how kind the audience was to \_me\_, it's personal and untrue as

well.”

But her voice broke and she sat down again and said in another tone:

“But, John, it's nearly a year, you know, since we saw each other last,

and isn't it a pity? Tell me, where are you living now? Have you made

your plans for the future? Oh, who do you think was with me just before

you called yesterday? Polly--Polly Love, you remember! She's grown stout

and plainer, poor thing, and I was so sorry----Her brother was in your

Brotherhood, wasn't he? Is he as strangely fond of her as ever? Is he?

Eh? Don't you understand? Polly's brother, I mean?”

“He's dead, Glory. Yes, dead. He died a month ago. Poor boy, he died

broken-hearted! He had come to hear of his sister's trouble at the

hospital. I was to blame for that. He never looked up again.”

There was silence; both were gazing into the fire, and Glory's mouth

was quivering. All at once she said: “John--John Storm, why can't you

understand that it's not the same with me as with other women? There

seem to be two women in me always. After I left the hospital I went

through a good deal. Nobody will ever know how much I went through. But

even at the worst, somehow I seemed to enjoy and rejoice in everything.

Things happened that made me cry, but there was another me that was

laughing. And that's how it is with the life I am living now. It is not

I myself that go through this--this mire, as you call it, it's only my

other self, my lower self, if you like, but I am not touched by it at

all. Don't you see that? Don't you, now?”

“There are professions which are a source of temptation, and talents

that are a snare, Glory----”

“I see, I see what you mean. There are not many ways a woman can succeed

in--that's the cruelty of things. But there are a few, and I've chosen

the one I'm fit for. And now, now that I've escaped from all that

misery, that meanness, and have brought the eyes of London upon me, and

the world is full of smiles for me, and sunshine, and I am happy, you

come at last, you that I couldn't find when I wanted you so much--oh,

so much!--because you had forgotten me; you come to me out of a darkness

like the grave and tell me to give it all up. Yes, yes, yes, that's what

you mean--give it all up! Oh, it's cruel!”

She covered her face with her hands and sobbed. He bent over her with a

sorrowful face and said, “My child, if I have come out of a darkness

as of the grave it is because I had \_not\_ forgotten you there, but was

thinking of you every day and hour.”

Her sobbing ceased, but the tears still flowed through her fingers.

“Before that poor lad abandoned hope he came out into the world

too-stole out-thinking to find his lost one. I told him to look for you

first, and he went to the hospital.”

“I saw him.”

“You!”

“It was on New Year's Eve. He passed me in the street.”

“Ah!--Well, he came back anyway, and said you were gone, and all trace

of you was lost. Did I forget you after that, Glory?”

His husky voice broke off suddenly, and he rose with a look of

wretchedness. “You are right, there are two selves in you, and the

higher self is so pure, so strong, so unselfish, so noble--Oh, I am sure

of it, Glory! Only there's no one to speak to it, no one. I try, but I

can not.”

She was still crying behind her hands.

“And meanwhile the lower self--there are only too many to speak to

\_that\_----”

Her hands came down from her disordered face and she said, “I know whom

you mean.”

“I mean the world.”

“No, indeed, you mean Mr. Drake. But you are mistaken. Mr. Drake has

been a good friend to me, but he isn't anything else, and doesn't want

to be. Can't you see that when you think of me and talk of me as you

would of some other women you hurt me and degrade me, and I can not bear

it? You see I am crying again--goodness knows why. But I sha'n't give up

my profession. The idea of such a thing! It's ridiculous! Think of Glory

in a convent! One of the poor Clares perhaps!”

“Hush!”

“Or back in the island serving out sewing at a mothers' meeting! Give it

up! Indeed I won't!”

“You shall and you must!”

“Who'll make me?”

“\_I\_ will!”

Then she laughed out wildly, but stopped on the instant and looked up at

him with glistening eyes. An intense blush came over her face, and her

looks grew bright as his grew fierce. A moment afterward the waiting

maid, with an inquisitive expression, was clearing the table and keeping

a smile in reserve for “the lovers' quarrel!”

Some of the Guardsmen were in the train going back, and at the next

station they changed to the carriage in which Glory and John were

sitting. Apparently they had dined before leaving their club at

Maidenhead, and they talked at Glory with covert smiles. “Going to the

Colosseum tonight?” said one. “If there's time,” said another. “Oh,

time enough. The attraction doesn't begin till ten, don't you know, and

nobody goes before.” “Tell me she's rippin'.” “Good--deuced good.”

Glory was sitting with her back to the engine drumming lightly on the

window and looking out at the setting sun. At first she felt a certain

shame at the obvious references, but, piqued at John's silence,

she began to take pride in them, and shot glances at him from under

half-closed eyelids. John was sitting opposite with his arms folded. At

the talk of the men he felt his hands contract and his lips grow cold

with the feeling that Glory belonged to everybody now and was common

property. Once or twice he looked at them and became conscious of an

impression, which had floated about him since he left the Brotherhood,

that nearly every face he saw bore the hideous stamp of self-indulgence

and sensuality.

But the noises of the train helped him not to hear, and he looked out

for London. It lay before them under a canopy of smoke, and now and then

a shaft from the setting sun lit up a glass roof and it glittered like a

sinister eye. Then there came from afar, over the creaking and groaning

of the wheels and the whistle of the engine, the deep, multitudinous

murmur of that distant sea. The mighty tide was rising and coming up

to meet them. Presently they were dashing into the midst of it, and

everything was drowned in the splash and roar.

The Guardsmen, being on the platform side, alighted first, and on going

off they bowed to Glory with rather more than easy manners. A dash of

the devil prompted her to respond demonstratively, but John had

risen and was taking off his hat to the men, and they were going away

discomfited. Glory was proud of him--he was a man and a gentleman.

He put her into a hansom under the lamps outside the station, and her

face was lit up, but she patted the dog and said: “You have vexed me and

you needn't come to see me again. I shall not sing properly this evening

or sleep tonight at all, if that is any satisfaction to you, so you

needn't trouble to inquire.”

\* \* \* \* \*

When he reached home Mrs. Callender told him of a shocking occurrence at

the fashionable wedding at All Saints' that morning. A young woman had

committed suicide during the ceremony, and it turned out to be the poor

girl who had been dismissed from the hospital.

John Storm remembered Brother Paul. “I must bury her,” he thought.

V.

Glory sang that night with extraordinary vivacity and charm and was

called back again and again. Going home in the cab she tried to live

through the day afresh--every step, every act, every word, down to that

triumphant “\_I\_ will.” Her thoughts swayed as with the swaying of the

hansom, but sometimes the thunderous applause of the audience broke in,

and then she had to remember where she had left off. She could feel that

beating against her breast still, and even smell the violets that grew

by the pool. He had told her to give up everything, and there was

an exquisite thrill in the thought that perhaps some day she would

annihilate herself and all her ambitions, and--who knows what then?

This mood lasted until Monday morning, when she was sitting in her

room, dressing very slowly and smiling at herself in the glass, when the

Cockney maid came in with a newspaper which her master had sent up on

account of its long report of the wedding.

“The Church of All Saints' was crowded by a fashionable congregation,

among whom were many notable persons in the world of politics and

society, including the father of the bridegroom, the Duke of ---- and

his brother, the Marquis of ----. An arch of palms crossed the nave at

the entrance to the chancel, and festoons of rare flowers were suspended

from the rails of the handsome screen. The altar and the table of the

commandments were almost obscured by the wreaths of exotics that hung

over them, and the columns of the colonnade, the font and offertory

boxes were similarly buried in rich and lovely blossom.

“Thanks to an informal rehearsal some days before, the ceremony went off

without a hitch. The officiating clergy were the Venerable Archdeacon

Wealthy, D. D., assisted by the Rev. Josiah Golightly and other members

of the numerous staff of All Saints'. The service, which was fully

choral, was under the able direction of the well-known organist and

choirmaster, Mr. Carl Koenig, F. R. C. O., and the choir consisted

of twenty adult and forty boy voices. On the arrival of the bride a

procession was formed at the west entrance and proceeded up to the

chancel, singing 'The voice that breathed o'er Eden----”

“Poor Polly!” thought Glory.

“The bride wore a duchess satin gown trimmed with chiffon and Brussels

lace, and having a long train hung from the shoulders. Her tulle veil

was fastened with a ruby brooch and with sprays of orange blossom sent

specially from the Riviera, and her necklace consisted of a rope of

graduated pearls fully a yard long, and understood to have belonged to

the jewel case of Catharine of Russia. She carried a bouquet of flowers

(the gift of the bridegroom) brought from Florida, the American home

of her family. The bride's mother wore---- The bridesmaids were

dressed----Mr. Horatio Drake acted as best man----”

Glory drew her breath as with a spasm and threw down the newspaper. How

blind she had been, how vain, how foolish! She had told John Storm that

Drake was only a good friend to her, meaning him to understand that thus

far she allowed him to go and no farther. But there was a whole realm of

his life into which he did not ask her to enter. The “notable persons in

politics and society,” “the bridesmaids,” these made up his real sphere,

his serious scene. Other women were his friends, companions, equals,

intimates, and when he stood in the eye of the world it was they who

stood beside him. And she? She was his hobby. He came to her in his off

hours. She filled up the under side of his life.

With a crushing sense of humiliation she was folding up the newspaper

to send it downstairs when her eye was arrested by a paragraph in small

type in the corner. It was headed “Shocking occurrence at a fashionable

wedding.”

“Oh, good gracious!” she cried. A glance had shown her what it was. It

was a report of Polly's suicide.

“At a fashionable wedding at a West-End church on Saturday” (no names)

“a young woman who had been sitting in the nave was seen to rise and

attempt to step into the aisle, as if with the intention of crushing

her way out, when she fell back in convulsions, and on being removed was

found to be dead. Happily, the attention of the congregation was at the

moment directed to the bride and bridegroom, who were returning from the

vestry with the bridal party behind them, and thus the painful incident

made no sensation among the crowded congregation. The body was removed

to the parish mortuary, and from subsequent inquiries it transpired that

death had been due to poison self-administered, and that the deceased

was Elizabeth Anne Love (twenty-four), of no occupation, but formerly a

nurse--a circumstance which had enabled her to procure half a grain of

liquor strychninae on her own signature at a chemist's where she had

been known.”

“O God! O God!” Glory understood everything now. “I've a great mind to

go to All Saints' and shame them--Oh, it isn't the police I'm afraid

of.” Polly's purpose was clear. She had intended to fall dead at the

feet of the bride and bridegroom and make them walk over her body.

Poor, foolish, ineffectual Polly! Her very ghost must be ashamed of the

failure of her revenge. Not a ripple of sensation on Saturday, and this

morning only a few obscure lines in little letters!

Oh, it was hideous! The poor thing's vengeance was theatrical and

paltry, but what of the man, wherever he was? What did he think of

himself now, with his millions and his murder? Yes, his murder, for what

else was it?

An hour later Glory was ringing the bell of a little house in St. John's

Wood whereof the upper blinds were drawn. The grating of the garden door

slid back and an untidy head looked out.

“Well, ma'am?”

“Don't you remember me, Liza?”

“Lawd, yus, miss!” and the door was opened immediately; “but I was

afeard you was one o' them reportin' people, and my orders is not to

answer no questions.”'

“Has \_he\_ been here, then?”

“Blesh ye, no, miss! He's on 'is way to the Continents. But 'is friend

'as, and he's settled everything 'andsome--I will say that for the

gentleman.”

Glory felt her gall rising; there was something degrading, almost

disreputable, even in the loyalty of Drake's friendship.

“Fancy Liza not knowing you, miss, and me at the moosic 'all a Tuesday

night! I 'ope you'll excuse the liberty, but I \_did\_ laugh, and I won't

say but I shed a few tears too. Arranged? Yes, the jury and the coroner

and every-think. It's to be at twelve o'clock, so you may think I've 'ad

my 'ands full. But you'll want to look at 'er, pore thing! Go up, miss,

and mind yer 'ead; there's nobody but 'er friends with 'er now.”

The friends proved to be Betty Belmont and her dressing-room companions.

When Glory entered they showed no surprise. “The pore child told us all

about you,” said Betty; and the little one said: “It's your nyme that

caught on, dear. The minute I heard it I said what a top-line for a,

bill!”

It was the same little bandbox of a bedroom, only now it was darkened

and Polly's troubles were over. There was a slightly convulsed look

about the mouth, but the features were otherwise calm and childlike, for

all the dead are innocent.

The three women with demure faces were sipping Benedictine and talking

among themselves, and Polly's pug dog was coiled up on the bare bolster

and snoring audibly.

“Pore thing! I don't know how she could 'a done it. But there, that's

the worst of this life! It's all in the present and leads to nothing

and ain't got no future.” “What could the pore thing do? She wasn't so

wonderful pretty; and then men like----” “She was str'ight with him, say

what yer like. Only she ought to been more patienter, and she needn't 'a

been so hard on the lady, neither.” “She had everything the heart could

wish. Look at her rooms! I wonder who'll----”

Carriages were heard outside, and two or three men came in to do the

last offices. Glory had turned her face away, but behind her the women

were still talking. “Wait a minute, mister! ... What a lovely ring! ...

I wish I had a keepsake to remember her by.” “Well, and why not? She

won't want----”

Glory felt as if she was choking, but Polly's pug dog had been awakened

by the commotion and was beginning to howl, so she took up the little

mourner and carried it out. An organ-man somewhere near was playing

Sweet Marie.

The funeral was at Kensal Green, and the four girls were the only

followers. The coroner's verdict being \_felo-de-se\_, the body was not

taken into the chapel, but a clergyman met it at the gate and led the

way to the grave. Walking with her head down and the dog under her arm,

Glory had not seen him at first, but when he began with the tremendous

words, “I am the resurrection and the life,” she caught her breath and

looked up. It was John Storm.

While they were in the carriage the clouds had been gathering, and now

some spots of rain were falling. When the bearers had laid down their

burden the spots were large and frequent, and all save one of the men

turned and went back to the shelter of the porch. The three women looked

at each other, and one of them muttered something about “the dead and

the living,” and then the little lady stole away. After a moment the

tall one followed her, and from shame of being ashamed the third one

went off also.

By this time the rain was falling in a sharp shower, and John Storm, who

was bareheaded, had opened his book and begun to read: “Forasmuch as it

hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the

soul of our dear sister here departed----”

Then he saw that Glory was alone by the graveside, and his voice

faltered and almost failed him. It faltered again, and he halted when he

came to the “sure and certain hope,” but after a moment it quivered and

filled out and seemed to say, “Which of us can sound the depths of God's

design?” After the “maimed rites” were over, John Storm went back to the

chapel to remove his surplice, and when he returned to the grave Glory

was gone.

She sang as usual at the music hall that night, but with a heavy heart.

The difference communicated itself to the audience, and the unanimous

applause which had greeted her before frayed off at length into separate

hand-claps. Crossing the stage to her dressing-room she met Koenig, who

came to conduct for her, and he said:

“Not quite yourself to-night, my dear, eh?”

Going home in the hansom, Polly's dog coddled up with the old sympathy

to the new mistress, and seemed to be making the best of things. The

household was asleep, and Glory let herself in with a latch-key. Her

cold supper was laid ready, and a letter was lying under the turned-down

lamp. It was from her grandfather, and had been written after church on

Sunday night:

“It is now so long--more than a year--since I saw my runaway and truant

that, notwithstanding the protests of Aunt Anna and the forebodings of

Aunt Rachel, I have determined to give my old legs a journey and my old

eyes a treat. Therefore take warning that I intend to come up to London

forthwith, that I may see the great city for the first time in my life,

and--which is better--my little granddaughter among all her new friends

and in the midst of her great prosperity.”

At the foot of this there was a postscript from Aunt Rachel, hastily

scrawled in pencil:

“Take no notice of this. He is far too weak to travel, and indeed he

is really failing; but your letter, which reached us last night, has so

troubled him ever since that he can't take rest for thinking of it.”

It was the last straw. Before finishing the letter or taking off her

hat, Glory took up a telegraph form and wrote, “Postpone journey--am

returning home to-morrow.” Then she heard Koenig letting himself into

the house, and going downstairs she said:

“Will you take this message to the telegraph office for me, please?”

“Vhy, of course I vill, and den ve'll have supper togeder--look!” and he

laughed and opened a paper and drew out a string of sausages.

“Mr. Koenig,” she said, “you were right. I was not myself to-night. I

want a rest, and I propose to take one.”

As Glory returned upstairs she heard stammerings, sputterings, and

swearings behind her about managers, engagements, announcements,

geniuses, children, and other matters. Back in her room she lay down on

the floor, with her face in her hands, and sobbed. Then Koenig appeared,

panting and saying: “Dere! I knew vhat vould happen! Here's a pretty

ting! And dat's vhy Mr. Drake told me to deny you to de man. De brute,

de beast, de dirty son of a monk!”

But Glory had leaped up with eyes of fire, and was crying: “How dare

you, sir? Out of my room this instant!”

“Mein Gott! It's a divil!” Koenig was muttering like a servant as he

went downstairs. He went out to the telegraph office and came back, and

then Glory heard him frying his sausages on the dining-room fire.

The night was far gone when she pushed aside her untouched supper,

and, wiping her eyes, that she might see properly, sat down to write a

letter.

“Dear John Storm (monk, monster, or whatever it is!): I trust it will be

counted to me for righteousness that I am doing your bidding and giving

up my profession--for the present.

“Between a woman's 'yes' and 'no'

There isn't room for a pin to go,

which is very foolish of her in this instance, considering that she is

earning various pounds a night and has nothing but Providence to fall

back upon. I have told my jailer I must have my liberty, and, being a

man of like passions with yourself, he has been busy blaspheming in the

parlour downstairs. I trust virtue will be its own reward, for I dare

say it is all I shall ever get. If I were Narcissus I should fall in

love with myself to-day, having shown an obedience to tyranny which is

beautiful and worthy of the heroic age. But to-morrow morning I go back

to the 'oilan,' and it will be so nice up there without anybody and all

alone!”

She was laughing softly to herself as she wrote, and catching her breath

with a little sob at intervals.

“A letter now and then is profitable to the soul of man--and--woman; but

you must not expect to hear from \_me\_, and as for you, though you \_have\_

resurrected yourself, I suppose a tyrant of your opinions will continue

the Benedictine rule which compels you to hold your peace--and other

things. I am engaged to breakfast with a nice girl named Glory Quayle

to-morrow morning--that is to say, \_this\_ morning--at Euston Station at

a quarter to seven, but happily this letter won't reach you until 7.30,

so I'll just escape interruption.”

The house was still and the streets were quiet, not even a cab going

along.

“Good-bye! I've realized--a dog! It's a pug, and therefore, like

somebody else, it always looks black at me, though I suspect its father

married beneath him, for it talks a good deal, and evidently hasn't been

brought up in a Brotherhood. Therefore, being a 'female,' I intend to

call it Aunt Anna--except when the original is about. Aunt Anna has been

hopping up and down the room at my heels for the last hour, evidently

thinking that a rational woman would behave better if she went to bed.

Perhaps I shall take a leaf out of your book and 'comb her hair,' when

I get her all alone in the train to-morrow, that she may be prepared for

the new sphere to which it has pleased Providence to call her.

“Good-bye again! I see the lamps of Euston running after each other,

only it's the \_other\_ way this time. I find there is something that

seizes you with a fiercer palpitation than coming \_into\_ a great and

wonderful city, and that is going out of one. Dear old London! After

all, it has been very good to me. No one, it seems to me, loves it as

much as I do. Only somebody thinks--well, never mind! Goodbye 'for all!'

Glory.”

At seven next morning, on the platform at Euston, Glory was standing

with melancholy eyes at the door of a first-class compartment watching

the people sauntering up and down, talking in groups and hurrying to

and fro, when Drake stepped up to her. She did not ask what had brought

him--she knew. He looked fresh and handsome, and was faultlessly

dressed.

“You are doing quite right, my dear,” he said in a cheerful voice.

“Koenig telegraphed, and I came to see you off. Don't bother about

the theatre; leave everything to me. Take a rest after your great

excitement, and come back bright and well.”

The locomotive whistled and began to pant, the smoke rose to the roof,

the train started, and before Glory knew she was going she was gone.

Then Drake walked to his club and wrote this postscript to a letter to

Lord Robert Ure, at the Grand Hotel, Paris: “The Parson has drawn first

blood, and Gloria has gone home!”

VI.

On the Sunday evening after Glory's departure John Storm, with the

bloodhound running by his side, made his way to Soho in search of the

mother of Brother Andrew. He had come to a corner of a street where the

walls of an ugly brick church ran up a narrow court and turned into

a still narrower lane at the back. The church had been for some time

disused, and its facade was half covered with boardings and plastered

with placards: “Brighton and Back, 3\_s\_.”; “\_Lloyd's News\_”; “Coals,

1\_s\_. a cwt.”; and “Barclay's Sparkling Ales.”

There was a tumult in the court and lane. In the midst of a close-packed

ring of excited people, chiefly foreigners, shouting in half the

languages of Europe, a tall young Cockney, with bloated face and eyes

aflame with drink, was writhing and wrestling and cursing. Sometimes

he escaped from the grasp of the man who held him, and then he flung

himself against the closed door of a shop which stood opposite, with the

three balls of the pawnbroker suspended above it. Somebody within the

shop was howling for help. It was a woman's voice, and the louder she

screamed the more violent were the man's efforts to beat down the door

between them.

As John Storm stood a moment looking on, some one on the street beside

him said, “It's a d---- shyme.” It was a man with a feeble, ineffectual

face and the appearance of a waiter. Seeing he had been overheard, the

man stammered: “Beg parding, sir; but they may well say 'when the Devil

can't come hisself 'e sends 'is brother Drink.'” Having said this he

began to move along, but stopped suddenly on seeing what the clergyman

with the dog was doing.

John Storm was pushing his way through the crowd, and his black

figure in that writhing ring of undersized foreigners looked big and

commanding. “What's this?” he was saying in a husky voice that rose

clear above the clamour. The shouting and swearing subsided, all save

the howling from the inside of the shop, and the tumult settled down in

a moment to mutterings and gnashings and a broken and irregular silence.

Then somebody said, “It's nothink, sir.” And somebody else said, “'Es

on'y drunk, and wantin' to pench 'is mother.” Without listening to this

explanation John Storm had laid hold of the young man by the collar and

was dragging him, struggling and fuming, from the door.

“What's going on?” he demanded. “Will nobody speak?”

Then a poor swaggering imitation of a man came up out of the cellar of

a house that stood next to the disused church, and a comely young woman

carrying a baby followed close behind him. He had a gin bottle in his

hands, and with a wink he said: “A christenin'--that's what's going on.

'Ave a kepple o' pen'orth of 'ollands, old gel?”

At this sally the crowd recovered its audacity and laughed, and the

drunken man began to say that he could “knock spots out of any bloomin'

parson, en' now bloomin' errer.”

But the young fellow with the gin bottle broke in again. “What's yer

gime, mister? Preach the gawspel? Give us trecks? This is my funeral,

down't ye know, and I'd jest like to hear.”

The little foreigners were enjoying the parson-baiting, and the drunken

man's courage was rising to fever heat. “I'll give 'im one-two between

the eyes if 'e touches me again.” Then he flung himself on the pawnshop

like a battering ram, the howling inside, which had subsided, burst out

afresh, and finally the door was broken down.

Half a minute afterward the crowd was making a wavering dance about

the two men. “Look out, ducky!” the young fellow shouted to John. The

warning came too late--John went reeling backward from a blow.

“Now, my lads, who says next?” cried the drunken ruffian. But before the

words were out of his mouth there was a growl, a plunge, a snarl, and

he was full length on the street with the bloodhound's muzzle at his

throat.

The crowd shrieked and began to fly. Only one person seemed to remain.

It was an elderly woman, with dry and straggling gray hair. She had come

out of the pawnshop and thrown herself on the dog in an effort to rescue

the man underneath, crying: “My son--oh, my son! It'll kill him! Tyke

the beast away!”

John Storm called the dog off, and the man got up unhurt, and nearly

sober. But the woman continued to moan over the ruffian and to assail

John and his dog with bitter insults. “We want no truck with parsons

'ere,” she shouted.

“Stou thet, mother. It was my fault,” said the sobered man, and then the

woman began to cry. At the next minute John Storm was going with mother

and son into the shut-up pawnshop, and the unhinged door was being

propped behind them.

The crowd was trailing off when he came out again half an hour

afterward, and the only commotion remaining was caused by a belated

policeman asking, “Wot's bin the matter 'ere?” and by the young fellow

with the gin bottle performing a step-dance on the pavement before the

entrance to the cellar. The old woman stood at her door wiping her eyes

on her apron, and her son was behind with a face that was now red from

other causes than drink and rage.

“Good-bye, Mrs. Pincher; I may see you again soon.”

Hearing this, the young swaggerer stopped his step-dancing and cried:

“What cheer, myte? Was it a blowter and a cup of cawfy?”

“For shynie, Charlie!” cried the girl with a baby, and the young fellow

answered, “Shut yer 'ead, Aggie!”

The waiter was still at the corner of the court, and when John came up

he spoke again. “There must be sem amoosement knockin' women abart, but

I can't see it myself.” Then in a simple way he began to talk about

his “missis,” and what a good creature she was, and finally announced

himself “gyme” to help a parson “as stood up to that there drunken

blowke for sake of a woman.”

“What's your name?” said John.

“Jupe,” said the man, and then something stirred in John's memory.

On the following day John Storm dined with his uncle at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister was waiting in the library. In evening dress, with

his back to the fireplace and his hands enlaced behind him, he looked

even more thin and gaunt than before. He welcomed John with a few

familiar words and a smile. His smile was brief and difficult, like

that which drags across the face of an invalid. Dinner was announced

immediately, and the old man took the young one's arm and they passed

into the dining-room.

The panelled chamber looked cold and cheerless. It was lighted by

a single lamp in the middle of the table. They took their seats at

opposite sides. The statesman's thin hair shone on his head like streaks

of silver. John exercised a strong physical influence upon him, and all

through the dinner his bleak face kept smiling.

“I ought to apologize for having nobody to meet you, but I had something

to say--something to suggest--and I thought perhaps----”

John interrupted with affectionate protestations, and a tremor passed

over the wrinkles about the old man's eyes.

“It is a great happiness to me, my dear boy, that you have turned your

back on that Brotherhood, but I presume you intend to adhere to the

Church?”

John intended to take priest's orders without delay, and then go on with

his work as a clergyman.

“Just so, just so”--the long, tapering fingers drummed on the

table--“and I should like to do something to help you.”

Then sipping at his wine-glass of water, the Prime Minister, in his

slow, deep voice and official tone, began to detail his scheme. There

was a bishopric vacant. It was only a colonial one--the Bishopric of

Colombo. The income was small, no more than seventeen hundred pounds,

the work was not light, and there were fifty clergy. Then a colonial

bishopric was not usually a stepping-stone to preferment at home, yet

still----

John interrupted again. “You are most kind, uncle, but I am only looking

forward to living the life of a poor priest, out of sight of the world

and the Church.”

“Surely Colombo is sufficiently out of sight, my boy?”

“But I see no necessity to leave London.”

The Prime Minister glanced at him steadily, with the concentrated

expression of a man who is accustomed to penetrate the thoughts and

feelings of another.

“Why then--why did you----”

“Why did I leave the monastery, uncle? Because I had come to see that

the monastic system was based on a faulty ideal of Christianity, which

had been tried for the greater part of nineteen hundred years and

failed. The theory of monasticism is that Christ died to redeem our

carnal nature, and all we have to do is to believe and pray. But it

is not enough that Christ died once. He must be dying always--every

day--and in every one of us. God is calling on us in this age to seek a

new social application of the Gospel, or, shall I say, to go back to the

old one?”

“And that is----?”

“To present Christ in practical life as the living Master and King and

example, and to apply Christianity to the life of our own time.”

The Prime Minister had not taken his eyes off him. “What does this

mean?” he had asked himself, but he only smiled his difficult smile

and began to talk lightly. If this creed applied to the individual it

applied also to the State; but think of a cabinet conducting the affairs

of a nation on the charming principle of “taking no thought for the

morrow,” and “loving your enemies,” and “turning the other cheek,” and

“selling all and giving to the poor”!

John stuck to his guns. If the Christian religion could not be the

ultimate authority to rule a Christian nation, it was only because we

lacked faith and trusted too much to mechanical laws made by statesmen

rather than to moral laws made by Christ. “Either the life of Christ, as

the highest standard and example, means something or it means nothing.

If something, let us try to follow it; but if nothing, then for God's

sake let us put it away as a cruel, delusive, and damnable mummery!”

The Prime Minister continued to ask himself, “What is the key to this?”

and to look at John as he would have looked at a problem that had to be

solved, but he only went on smiling and talking lightly. It was true we

said a prayer and took an oath on the Bible in the Houses of Parliament,

but did anybody think for a moment that we intended to trust the nation

to the charming romanticism of the politics of Jesus? As for the Church,

it was founded on acts of Parliament, it was endowed and established by

the State, its head was the sovereign, its clergy were civil servants

who went to levées and hung on the edge of drawing-rooms and troubled

the knocker of No. 10 Downing-Street. And as for Christ's laws--in this

country they were interpreted by the Privy Council and were under

the direct control of a State department. Still, it was a harmless

superstition that we were a Christian nation. It helped to curb the

masses of the people, and if that was what John was thinking of----

The Prime Minister paused and stopped.

“Tell me, my boy,” touching John's arm, “do you intend yourself to

live--in short, the--well, after the example of the life of Christ?”

“As far as my weak and vain and sinful nature will permit, uncle!”

“And in what way would you propose to apply your new idea of

Christianity?”

“My experiment would be made on a social basis, sir, and first of all in

relation to women.” John was hot all over, and his face had flushed up

to the eyes.

The Prime Minister glanced stealthily across the table, passed his thin

hand across his forehead, and thought, “So that's how it is!” But John

was deep in his theme and saw nothing. The present position of women was

intolerable. Upon the well-being of women, especially of working women,

the whole welfare of society rested. Yet what was their condition? Think

of it--their dependence on man, their temptations, their rewards, their

punishments! Three halfpence an hour was the average wage of a working

woman in England!--and that in the midst of riches, in the heart of

luxury, and with one easy and seductive means of escape from poverty

always open. Ruin lay in wait for them, and was beckoning them and

enticing them in the shape of dancing houses and music halls and rich

and selfish men.

“Not one man in a million, sir, would come through such an ordeal

unharmed. And yet what do we do?--what does the Church do for these

brave creatures on whose virtue and heroism the welfare of the nation

depends? If they fall it cuts them off, and there is nothing before

them but the streets or crime or the Union or suicide. And meanwhile it

marries the men who have tempted them to the snug and sheltered darlings

for whose wealth or rank or beauty they have been pushed aside. Oh,

uncle, when I walk down Regent Street in the daytime I am angry, but

when I walk down Regent Street at night I am ashamed. And then to think

of the terrible solitude of London to working girls who want to live

pure lives--the terrible spiritual loneliness!”

John's voice was breaking, but the Prime Minister had almost ceased to

hear. Thinking he had realized the truth at last, his own youth seemed

to be sitting before him and he felt a deep pity.

“Coffee here or in the library, your lordship?” said the man at his

elbow.

“The library,” he answered, and taking John's arm again he returned to

the other room. There was a fire burning now, and a book lay under the

lamp on a little table, with a silver paper-cutter through the middle to

mark the page.

“How you remind me of your mother sometimes, John! That was just like

her voice, do you know--just!”

Two hours afterward he led John Storm down the long corridor to the

hall. His bleak face looked soft and his deep voice had a slight tremor.

“Good-night, my dear boy, and remember your money is always waiting for

you. Until your Christian social state is established you are only an

advocate of socialism, and may fairly use your own. If yours is the

Christianity of the first century it has to exist in the nineteenth, you

know. You can't live on air or fly without wings. I shall be curious to

see what approach, to the Christian ideal the condition of civilization

admits of. Yet I don't know what your religious friends and the humdrum

herd will think of you--mad probably, or at least weak and childish and

perhaps even a hunter after easy popularity. But good-night, and God

bless you in, your people's church and Devil's Acre!”

John was flushed and excited. He had been talking of his plans, his

hopes, his expectations. God would provide for him in this as in

everything, and then God's priest ought to be God's poor. Meantime two

gentlemen in plush waited for him at the door. One handed him his hat,

the other his stick and gloves.

Then with regular steps, and his hands behind him, the Prime Minister

paced back through the quiet corridors. Returning to the library, he

took up his book and tried to read. It was a novel, but he could not

attend to the incidents in other people's lives. From time to time he

said to himself: “Poor boy! Will he find her? Will he save her?” One

pathetic idea had fixed itself on his mind--John Storm's love of God was

love of a woman, and she was fallen and wrecked and lost.

A fortnight later John wrote to Glory:

“Fairly under weigh at last, dear Glory! Taken priest's orders, got the

Bishop's 'license to officiate,' and found myself a church. It is St.

Mary Magdalene's, Crown Street, Soho, a district that has borne for

three hundred years the name of the 'Devil's Acre,' bears it still,

and deserves it. The church is an old proprietary place, licensed, not

consecrated, formerly belonging to Greek, or Italian, or French, or some

other refugees, but long shut up and now much out of repair. Present

owners, a company of Greek merchants, removed from Soho to the City, and

being too poor (as trustees) to renovate the structure, they have forced

me to get money for that purpose from my uncle, the Prime Minister. But

the money is my own, apparently, my uncle having in my interest demanded

from my father ten thousand pounds out of my mother's dowry, and got it.

And now I am spending two thousand on the repair of my church buildings,

notwithstanding the protests of the Prime Minister, who calls me

'chaplain to the Greek-Turks,' and of Mrs. Callender, who has discovered

that I am a 'maudlin, sentimental, daft young spendthrift.' Dare say I

am all that and a good deal more, as the wise world counts wisdom--but

it matters little!

“Have not waited for the workmen, though, to begin operations. Took

first services last Sunday. No organist, no choir, no clerk, and next to

no congregation. Just the church cleaner, a good, simple old soul

named Pincher, her son, a reformed drunkard and pawnbroker, and another

convert who is a club waiter. Nevertheless, I went through the whole

service, morning and evening, prayers, psalms, and sermon. God will be

the more glorified.

“Have started my new crusade on behalf of women, too, and made various

processions of three persons through the streets of Soho. First, my

pawnbroker bearing the banner (a white cross, the object of various

missiles), next my waiter carrying a little harmonium, and familiarly

known as the 'organ man,' and finally myself in my cassock. Last

mentioned proves to be a highly popular performance, being generally

understood to be a man in a black petticoat. We have had a nightly

accompaniment of a much larger procession, though, calling themselves

'Skellingtons,' otherwise the 'Skeletons,' an army of low women and

roughs; who live vulture lives on this poor, soiled, grimy, forgotten

world. Thank God, the ground of evil-doers is in danger, and they know

it!

“Behind my church, in a dark, unwholesome alley called. Crook Lane, we

have a clergy house, at present let out in tenements, the cellar being

occupied as a gin shop. As soon as these premises can be cleared of

their encumbrances I shall turn them into a club for working girls. Why

not? In the old days the Church came to the people: let it come to the

people now. Here we are in the midst of this mighty stronghold of

the devil's kingdom of sin and crime. Foreign clubs, casinos, dancing

academies, and gambling houses are round about us. What are we to

do? Put up a forest of props (as at the Abbey) and keep off touch and

contamination? God forbid! Let us go down into these dens of moral

disease and disinfect them. The poor working girls, of Soho want their

Sunday: give it them. They want music and singing: give it them. They

want dancing: give them that also, for God's sake, give it them in your

churches, or the devil will give it them in his hells!

“Expect to be howled at of course. Some good people will think I am

either a fanatic or an artful schemer, while the clerical place-seekers,

who love the flesh-pots of Egypt and have their eyes on the thrones of

the Church and the world, will denounce my 'secularity' and tell me I

am feeding the 'miry troughs' of the publican and sinner. No matter, if

only God is pleased to vouchsafe 'signs following.' And one weary-faced

lonely girl, grown fresh of countenance and happy of mien, or one bright

little woman, snatched from the brink of perdition, will be a better

fruit, of religion than some of them have seen for many a year.

“As soon as the workmen have cleared out I am going to establish a daily

service and keep the church open always. Still at Mrs. Callender's, you

see; but I am refusing all invitations, except as a priest, and already

I don't seem to, have time to draw my breath. No income connected with

St. Mary Magdalene's, or next to none, just enough to pay the caretaker;

but I must not complain of that, for it is the accident to which I owe

my church, nobody else wanting it under the circumstances. I had begun

to think my time in the monastery wasted, but God knew better. It will

help me to live the life of poverty, of purity, of freedom from the

world.

“Love to the grandfather and the ladies. How I wish you were with me in

the thick of the fight! Sometimes I dream you are, too, and I fancy I

see you in the midst of these bright young things with their flowers and

feathers--they will make beautiful Christians yet! Oddly enough, on the

day you travelled to the island, every hour that took you farther away

seemed to bring you nearer. Greetings!”

VII.

“Glenfaba, 'the Oilan.'

“Oh, gracious and grateful friend, at length you have remembered the

existence of the 'poor lone crittur' living in dead-alive land! Only

that I lack gall to make oppression bitter, I should of course return

your belated epistle by the Dead Letter Office, marked 'Unknown' across

your 'Dear Glory,' there being no longer anybody in these regions who

has a plausible claim to that dubious title. But, alas! I am not my own

woman now, and with tears of shame I acknowledge that \_any\_ letter from

London comes like an angel's whisper breathed to me through the air.

“I dare say you have been unreasonable enough to think that I ought to

have written to tell you of my arrival; and knowing that man is born to

vanity as the sparks fly upward, I have more than once intended to take

pen in hand and write; but there is something so sleepy in this island

atmosphere that my good resolution has hitherto been a stillborn babe

that has breathed but never cried!

“Know then that my journey hither was performed with due celerity and

no further disaster than befalls me when, as usual, I have \_done\_ those

things which I ought not to have done, and left \_undone\_ those things

which I ought to have done--the former in this instance having

reference to various bouts of crying--which drew forth the sympathy of

a compassionate female sharper in the train--and the latter to the

catch of my sachel, which enabled that obliging person to draw forth my

embroidered pocket-handkerchief in exchange.

“I was in good time for the steamboat at Liverpool, and it was crowded,

according to its wont, with the Lancashire lads and lasses, in whom

affection is as contagious as the mumps. Being in the dumps myself on

sailing out of the river, and thinking of the wild excitement with which

I had sailed into it, I think I should have found that I had not \_done\_

crying in both senses but for the interest of watching an amiable Bob

Brierley who, with his arm about the waist of the person sitting next to

him, kept looking round at the rest of the world from time to time with

the innocence of one whose left hand didn't know what his right hand was

doing.

“But we had hardly crossed the bar when the prince of the powers of the

air began to envy the happiness of these dear young goodies, and if you

had seen the weather for the next four hours you would have agreed that

the devil must have had a hand in it! Up came a wave over the after

quarter and down went the passengers below decks, staggering and

screaming like brewery rats, and then on we came like the Israelites

out of Egypt on eagles' wings! Having lost my own sea legs a little I

thought it prudent to go down too, with my doggie tucked under my arm,

and finding a berth in the ladies' cabin, I fell asleep and didn't awake

until we were in the cross-current just off the island, when, amid

moans and groans and other noises, I heard the tearful voice of a sick

passenger asking, 'Is there any hope, stewardess?'

“The train got to Peel as the sun was setting behind the grim old castle

walls, and when I saw the dear little town again I dropped half a tear,

and even felt an insane desire to run out to meet it. Grandfather was at

the station with old 'Caesar' and the pony carriage, and when I had done

kissing him and he had done panting and puffing and talking nonsense, as

if I had been Queen Victoria and the Empress of the French rolled into

one, I could have cried to see how small and feeble he had become since

I went away. We could not get off immediately, for in his simple joy at

my return he was hailing everybody and everybody was hailing him,

and the dear old Pharisee was sounding his trumpet so often in the

market-place, that he might have glory of men, that I thought we should

never get up to Glenfaba that night. When we did so at length the old

aunties were waiting at the gate, and then he broke into exclamations

again. 'Hasn't she grown tall? Look at her! Hasn't she, now?' Whereupon

the aunties took up their parable with, 'Well, well! Aw, well! Aw, well

now! Well, ye navar!' So that by the time I got through I had kissed

everybody a dozen times, and was as red over the eyes as a grouse.

“Then we went into the house, and for the first five minutes I couldn't

tell what had come over the old place to make it look so small and

mean. It was just as if the walls of the rooms had been the bellows of

a concertina and somebody had suddenly shut them. But there was the long

clock clucking away on the landing, and there was Sir Thomas Traddles

purring on the hearth-rug, and there were the same plates on the

dresser, and the same map of Africa over the fireplace, with a spot of

red ink where my father died.

“The moon was glistening on the sea when I went to bed that night, and

when I got up in the morning the sun was shining on it, and a crow cut

across my window cawing, and I heard grandfather humming to himself

on the path below. And after my long spell in London, and my railway

journey of the day before, it was the same as if I had fallen asleep in

a gale on the high seas and awakened in a quiet harbour somewhere.

“So here I am, back at Glenfaba, in my old little room with my old

little bed, and everything exactly as it used to be; and I begin to

believe that when you went into that monastery you only just got the

start of me in being dead. There used to be a few people in this place,

but now there doesn't seem to be a dog left. All the youngsters have

'gone foreign,' and all the oldsters have gone to--'goodness knows

which.' Sometimes we hear the bleat of sheep on the mountains, and

sometimes the scream of seagulls overhead, and sometimes we hold a

convocation of all living rooks in the elms on the lawn. We take no

thought for the morrow, what we shall eat or what we shall put on, and

on Sundays when the church bell rings we go out, like the Israelites in

the wilderness, in clothes which wax not old after forty years. During

the rest of the week we watch the blue-bottles knocking their stupid

heads against the ceiling, and listen to the grasshoppers whispering

in the grass, and fall asleep to the hum of the bees, and awake to the

\_hee-haw\_ of old Neilus's 'canary.' [\* Donkey] Such is the dead-alive

life we live at Glenfaba, and the days of our years are threescore years

and ten, and if.... Ohoy! (A yawn.)

“I suppose it is basely ungrateful of me to talk like this, for the dear

place itself is lovely enough to disturb one's hope of paradise, and

this very morning is as fresh as the dew on the grass, with the larks

singing above, and the river singing below, and clouds like little curls

of foam hovering over the sea. And as for my three dear old dunces,

who love me so much more than I deserve, I am ashamed in my soul when I

overhear them planning good things for me to eat, and wild excitements

for me to revel in, that I may not be dull or miss the luxuries I am

accustomed to. 'Do you know I'm afraid Glory doesn't care so much for

pinjane after all,' I heard grandfather whispering to Aunt Anna one

morning, and half an hour afterward he was reproving Aunt Rachel for

pressing me too hard to serve at the soup kitchen.

“They govern me like a child in pinafores, and of course like a child I

revenge myself by governing all the house. But, oh, dear! oh, dear! gone

are the days when I could live on water-gruel and be happy in a go-cart.

Yes, the change is in me, not in them or the old home, and what's the

good of putting back the clock when the sun is so stubbornly keeping

pace? I might be happy enough at Glenfaba still, if I could only bring

back the days when the garden trees were my gymnasium and I used to rock

myself and sing like a bird on a bough in the wind, or when I led a

band of boys to rob our own orchard--a bold deed, for which Bishop Anna

ofttimes launched at me and! all her suffragans her severest censure--it

was her slipper, I remember. But I can't run barefoot all day long on

the wet sand now, with the salt spray blowing in my face, and a young

lady of one-and-twenty seldom or never rushes out to play dumps and

baggy-mug in public with little girls of ten.

“As a result, my former adventures are now limited to careering on

the back of little 'Caesar,' who has grown so ancient and fat that he

waddles like an old duck, and riding him is like working your passage.

So I confine myself to sitting on committees, and being sometimes sat

upon, and rubbing the runes for grandfather, and cleaning the milkpails

for Aunt Anna, and even such holy kill-times as going to church

regularly and watching Neilus when he is passing round the plate after

'Let your light so shine before men'--light to his practical intellect

being clearly a synonym for silver in the shape of threepenny bits!

“But, oh my! oh my! I am a dark character in this place for all that

The dear old goodies have never yet said a syllable about my letter

announcing that I had gone over to the enemy (i. e., Satan and the music

hall), and there is a dead hush in the house as often as the wind of

conversation veers in that direction. This is nothing, though, to the

white awe in the air when visitors call and I am questioned how I

earn my living in London. I hardly know whether to laugh or cry at the

long-drawn breath of relief when I wriggle out of a tight place without

telling a lie. But you can't hide an eel in a sack, and I know the truth

will pop out one of these days. Only yesterday I went district-visiting

with Aunt Rachel, and one of the Balaams of life, who keeps a tavern

for fishermen, lured us into his bar parlour to look at a portrait of

'Gloria' which he had cut out of an illustrated paper and pinned up on

the wall 'because it resembled me so much!' Oh, dear! oh, dear! I could

have found it in my heart to brazen it out on the spot at this sight of

my evil fame; but when I saw poor little auntie watching me with fearful

eyes I talked away like a mill-wheel and went out thanking God that the

rest of the people of Peel were not as other men are, or even as this

publican.

“I have been getting newspapers myself, though, sent by my friend Rosa;

and as long as the mis-reporters concerned themselves with my own

doings and failures to do, and lied as tenderly as an epitaph about my

disappearance from London, I cut them up and burned them. But when they

forgot me, and began to treat of other people's triumphs, I made Neilus

my waste-paper basket, on the understanding that the papers were to go

to the fishermen just home from Kinsale. Then from time to time he

told me they were 'goin' round, miss, goin' round,' and gave me other

assurances of 'the greatest circulation in the world,' which was true

enough certainly, though the old thief omitted to say it was at the

paper-mill, where they were being turned into pulp.

“But, heigho! I don't need newspapers to remind me of London. Like St.

Paul, I have a devil that beats me with fists, and as often as a clear

day comes, and one can see things a long way off, he makes me climb to

the top of Slieu Whallin [\* A mountain in Man.] that I may sit on the

beacon by the hour and strain my eyes for a glimpse of England, feeling

like Lot's wife when she looked back on her old home, and then coming

down with a heavy heart and a taste of tears in my mouth as if I had

been turned into a pillar of salt. Dear old London! But I suppose it is

going on its way just as it used to do, with its tides of traffic and

its crowds and carriages, and wandering merchants and hawkers crying

their wares, and everything the same as ever, just the same, although

Glory isn't there!”

\* \* \* \* \*

“10.30 P. M.--I had to interrupt the writing of my letter this morning

owing to an alarm of illness seizing grandfather. He had been taken

with a sudden faintness. Of course we sent for the doctor, but before he

arrived the faintness had passed, so he looked wise at us, like a

prize riddle which had to be guessed before his next visit, left us

his autograph (a wonderful hieroglyphic), and went away. Since then

grandfather has been in the hands of a less taciturn practitioner,

whom he calls the 'flower of Glenfaba' (that's me), and after talking

nonsense to him all day and playing chess with him all the evening I

have to put him to bed laughing, and come back to my own room to finish

my letter with an easier mind. For the last half-hour the aurora has

been pulsing in the northern sky, and I have been thinking that the

glorious phantasmagoria must be the sign of a gale in heaven, just as

sleet and mist and black wind are the signs of a gale on earth. But

it has tripped off into nothingness and only the dark night is left,

through which the dogs at Knockaloe are keeping up their private

correspondence with the dogs at Ballamoar by the medium of their nightly

howls.

“Oh, dear! Only 10.30! And to know that while we are going to bed by

country hours, with nearly everything still and dead around us, London

is just beginning to bestir itself! When I lie down and try to sleep I

shall see the wide squares, with their statues of somebody inside, and

the blaze of lights over the doors of the theatres, and all the tingling

life of the great and wonderful city. Ugh! It makes one feel like

one's own ghost wandering through the upper rooms and across the dark

landings, and hearing the strains of the music and the sounds of the

dancing from the ballroom below stairs!

“But, my goodness! (I can still swear on that, you see, and not be

forsworn!) 'What's the odds if you're jolly?--and I allus is!' How's

your dog? Mine would write you a letter, only her heart is moribund, and

if things go on as they are going she must set about making her will. In

fact, she is now lying at the foot of my bed thinking matters out, and

bids me tell you that after various attempts to escape Home Rule, not

being (like her mistress) one of those natures made perfect through

suffering, she is only 'kept alive by the force of her own volition,' in

this house that is full of old maids and has nothing better in it than

one old cat, and he isn't worth hunting, being destitute of a tail.

Naturally she is doing her best (like somebody else) to keep herself

unspotted from that world which is a source of so much temptation, but

she's bound to confess that a little 'divilment' now and then would help

her to take a more holy and religious view of life.

“I 'wish you happy' in your new enterprise; but if you are going in for

being the champion of woman in this world--of her wrongs--I warn you not

to be too pointed in your moral, for there is a story here of a handsome

young curate who was so particular in the pulpit with 'Lovest thou me'

that a lady followed him into the vestry and admitted that she did.

Soberly, it is a great and noble effort, and I've half a mind to love

you for it. If men want women to be good they \_will\_ be good, for women

dance to the tune that men like best, and always have done so since the

days of Adam--not forgetting that gentleman's temptation, nor yet his

excuse about 'the woman \_Thou gavest\_ me,' which shows he wasn't much of

a husband anyway, though certainly he hadn't much choice of a wife.

“My love to dear old London! Sometimes I have half a mind to skip off

and do my wooing myself. Perhaps I should do so, only that Rosa writes

that she would like to come and spend her summer holiday in Peel.

Haven't I told you about Rosa? She's the lady journalist that Mr. Drake

introduced me to.

“But let's to bed,

Said Sleepyhead.

“Glory.

“P.S.--IMPORTANT. Ever since I left London I have been tormented with

the recollection of poor Polly's baby. She put him out to nurse with the

Mrs. Jupe you heard of, and that person put him out to somebody else.

While the mother lived I had no business to interfere, but I can't help

thinking of the motherless mite now and wondering what has become of

him. I suppose that like Jeshurun he waxeth fat and kicketh by this

time, yet it would be the act of a man and a clergyman if anybody would

take up my neglected duty and make it his business to see that there is

somebody to love the poor child. Mrs. Jupe's address is 5a, The Little

Turnstile, going from Holborn into Lincoln's Inn Fields.”

VIII.

It was on a Saturday morning that John Storm received Glory's letter,

and on the evening of the same day he set out in search of Mrs. Jupe's.

The place was not easy to find, and when he discovered it at length he

felt a pang at the thought that Glory herself had lived in this dingy

burrowing. As he was going up to the door of the little tobacco shop a

raucous voice within was saying, “That's what's doo on the byeby, and

till you can py up you needn't be a-kemmin' 'ere no more.” At the next

moment a young woman crossed him on the threshold. She was a little

slender thing, looking like a flower that has been broken by the wet. He

recognised her as the girl who had nursed the baby in Cook Lane on the

day of his first visit to Soho. She was crying, and to hide her swollen

eyes she dropped her head at passing, and he saw her faded ribbons and

soiled straw hat.

A woman of middle age behind the counter was curtsying to his clerical

attire, and a little girl at the door of an inner room was looking at

him out of the corner of her eyes, with head aslant.

“Father Storm, I think, sir. Come in and set you down, sir.--Mind the

shop, Booboo.--My 'usband 'as told me about ye, sir. 'You'll know 'im at

onct, Lidjer,' 'e sez, siz 'e.--No, 'e ain't 'ome from the club yet, but

'e might be a-kemmin' in any time now, sir.”

John Storm had seated himself in the little dark parlour, and was

looking round and thinking of Glory. “No matter; my business is with

you, Mrs. Jupe,” he answered, and at that the twinkling eyes and fat

cheeks, which had been doing their best to smile, took on a look of

fear.

“Wot's the metter?” she asked, and she closed the door to the shop.

“Nothing, I trust, my good woman,” and then he explained his errand.

Mrs. Jupe listened attentively and seemed to be asking herself who had

sent him.

“The poor young mother is dead now, as you may know, and----”

“But the father ain't,” said the woman sharply, “and, begging your

parding, sir, if 'e wants ter know where the byeby is 'e can come

'isself and not send sembody else!”

“If the child is well, my good woman, and well cared for----”

“It \_is\_ well keered for, and it's gorn to a pusson I can trust.”

“Then what have you got to conceal? Tell me where it is, and----”

“Not me! If it's 'is child, and 'e wants it, let 'im py for it, and

interest ep ter dite. Them swells is too fond of gettin' parsons to pull

their chestnuts out o' the fire.”

“If you suppose I am here in the interests of the father, you are

mistaken, I do assure you.”

“Ow, you do, do yer?”

Matters had reached this pass when the door opened and Mr. Jupe came in.

Off went his hat with a respectful salutation, but seeing the cloud on

his wife's face, he abridged his greeting. The woman's apron was at her

eyes in an instant.

“Wot's gowin' on?” he asked. John Storm tried to explain, but the woman

contented herself with crying.

“Well, it's like this, don'cher see, Father. My missis is that fond of

childring, and it brikes 'er 'eart----”

Was the man a fool or a hypocrite?

“Mr. Jupe,” said John, rising, “I'm afraid your wife has been carrying

on an improper and illegal business.”

“Now stou thet, sir,” said the man, wagging his head. “I respects the

Reverend Jawn Storm a good deal, but I respects Mrs. Lidjer Jupe a good

deal more, and when it comes to improper and illegal bizniss----”

“Down't mind 'im, 'Enery,” said the wife, now weeping audibly.

“And down't you tyke on so, Lidjer,” said the husband, and they looked

as if they were about to embrace.

John Storm could stand no more. Going down the court he was thinking

with a pang of Glory--that she had lived months in the atmosphere of

that impostor--when somebody touched his arm in the darkness. It was the

girl. She was still crying.

“I reckerlec' seeing you in Crook Lane, sir, the day we christened my

byeby, and I waited, thinking p'raps you could help me.”

“Come this way,” said John, and walking by his side along the blank wall

of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the girl told her story. She lived in one

room of the clergy-house at the back of his church. Having to earn her

living, she had answered an advertisement in a Sunday paper, and Mrs.

Jupe had taken her baby to nurse. It was true she had given up all claim

to the child, but she could not help going to see it--the little one's

ways were so engaging. Then she found that Mrs. Jupe had let it out to

somebody else. Only for her “friend” she might never have heard of it

again. He had found it by accident at a house in Westminster. It was a

fearful place, where men went for gambling. The man who kept it had just

been released from eighteen months' imprisonment, and the wife had taken

to nursing while the husband was in prison. She was a frightful woman,

and he was a shocking man, and “they knocked the children about cruel.”

The neighbours heard screams and slaps and moans, and they were always

crying “Shame!” She had wanted to take her own baby away, but the woman

would not give it up because there were three weeks' board owing, and

she could not pay.

“Could you take me to this house, my child?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then come round to the church after service to-morrow night.”

The girl's tearful face glistened like April sunshine.

“And will you help me to get my little girl? Oh, how good you are!

Everybody is saying what a Father it is that's come to----” She stopped,

then said quite soberly: “I'll get somebody to lend me a shawl to bring

'er 'ome in. People say they pawn everything, and perhaps the beautiful

white perlice I bought for 'er ... Oh, I'll never let 'er out of my

sight again, never!”

“What is your name, my girl?”

“Agatha Jones,” the girl answered.

It was nearly eleven o'clock on Sunday night before they were ready to

start on their errand. Meantime Aggie had done two turns at the foreign

clubs, and John Storm had led a procession through Crown Street and been

hit by a missile thrown by a “Skeleton,” whom he declined to give in

charge. At the corner of the alley he stopped to ask Mrs. Pincher to

wait up for him, and the girl's large eyes caught sight of the patch of

plaster above his temple.

“Are you sure you want to go, sir?” she said.

“There's no time to lose,” he answered. The bloodhound was with him; he

had sent home for it since the attempted riot.

As they walked toward Westminster she told him where she had been, and

what money she had earned. It was ten shillings, and that would buy so

many things for baby.

“To-morrow I'll get a cot for her--one of those wicker ones; iron is so

expensive. She'll want a pair o' socks too, and by-and-bye she'll 'ave

to be shortened.”

John Storm was thinking of Glory. He seemed to be retreading the steps

of her life in London. The dog kept close at his heels.

“She'll 'a bin a month away now, a month to-morrow. I wonder if she's

grow'd much--I wonder! It's wrong of people letting their childring go

away from them. I'll never go out at nights again--not if I 'ave to tyke

in sewin' for the slop shops. See this?” laughing nervously and showing

a shawl that hung on her arm. “It's to bring 'er 'ome in--the nights is

so chill for a byeby.”

John's heart was heavy at sight of these little preparations, but the

young mother's face was radiant.

As they went by the Abbey, under its forest of scaffolding, and, walking

toward Millbank, dipped into the slums, that lie in the shadow of the

dark prison, they passed soldiers from the neighbouring barracks going

arm-in-arm with girls, and this made Aggie talk of her “friend,” and

cry a little, saying it was a week since she had seen him, and she was

afraid he must have 'listed. She knew he was rude to people sometimes,

and she asked pardon for him, but he wasn't such a bad boy, after all,

and he never knocked you about except when he was drinking.

The house they were going to was in Angel Court, and having its door

only to the front, it was partly sheltered from observation. A group of

women with their aprons over their heads stood talking in whispers at

the corner. One of them recognised Aggie and asked if she had got her

child yet, whereupon John stopped and made some inquiries. The goings-on

at the house were scandalous. The men who went to it were the lowest of

the low, and there was scarcely one of them who hadn't “done time.” The

man's name was Sharkey, and his wife was as bad as he was. She insured

the children at seven pounds apiece, and “Lawd love ye, sir, at that

price the poor things is worth more dead nor alive!”

Aggie's face was becoming white, and she was touching John Storm's elbow

as if pleading with him to come away, but he asked further questions.

Yes, there were several children. A twelve-months' baby, a boy, was

fretful with his teething, and on Sunday nights, when the woman was

wanted downstairs, she just put the poor darling to bed and locked the

room. If you lived next door, you could hear his crying through the

wall.

“Agatha,” said John, as they stepped up to the door, “get us both into

this house as best you can, then leave the rest to me.--Don, lie close!”

Aggie tapped at the door. A little slide in it was run back and a voice

said, “Who's there?”

“Aggie,” the girl answered.

“Who's that with you?”

“A friend of Charlie's,” and then the door was opened.

John crossed the threshold first, the dog followed him, the girl entered

last. When the door had closed behind them, the doorkeeper, a young man

holding a candle in his hand, was staring at John with his whole face

open.

“Hush! Not a word!--Don, watch that man!”

The young man looked at the dog and turned pale.

“Where is Mrs. Sharkey?”

“Downstairs, sir.”

There were sounds of men's voices from below, and from above there came

the convulsive sobs of a child, deadened as by a door between.

“Give me your candle.”

The man gave it.

“Don't speak or stir, or else----”

John glanced at the dog, and the man trembled.

“Come upstairs, child,” and the girl followed him to the upper floor.

On reaching the room in which the baby was crying they tried the door.

It was locked. John attempted to force it, but it would not yield. The

child's sobs were dying down to a sleepy moan.

Another room stood open and they went in. It was the living-room. A

kettle on the fire was singing and puffing steam. There was no sign of

a key anywhere. Only a table, some chairs, a disordered sofa, certain

sporting newspapers lying about, and a few pictures on the walls. Some

of the pictures were of race-horses, but all the rest were memorial

cards, and one bore the text, “He shall gather them in his arms.” Aggie

was shuddering as with cold, being chilled by some unknown fear.

“We must go down to the cellar--there's no help for it,” said John.

The man in the hall had not spoken or stirred. He was still gazing in

terror on the bloodshot eyes looking out of the darkness. John gave the

candle to the girl and began to go noiselessly downstairs. There was

not a movement in the house now. Big Ben was striking. It was twelve

o'clock.

At the next moment John Storm was midway down, and had full view of the

den. It was a washing cellar with a coal vault going out of it under the

street. Some fifteen or twenty men, chiefly foreigners, were gathered

about a large table covered with green baize, on which a small lamp was

burning. A few of the men were seated on chairs ranged about, the others

were standing at the back in rows two deep. They were gambling. The game

was faro. Rows of lucifer matches were laid on the table, half-crowns

were staked on them, and cards were cut and dealt. Except the banker, a

middle-aged man with the wild eye of the hard spirit-drinker, everybody

had his face turned away from the cellar stairs.

They did not smoke or drink, and they only spoke to each other when the

stakes were being received or paid. Then they quarrelled and swore in

English. After that there was a chilling and hideous silence, as if

something awful were about to occur. The lamp cast a strong light on the

table, but the rest of the room was darkened by patches of shadow.

The coal vault had been turned into a drinking-bar, and behind the

counter there was a well-stocked stillage. In the depths of its shade a

woman sat knitting. She had a gross red and white face, and in the arch

above her was the iron grid in the pavement. Somebody on the street

walked over it, causing a hollow sound as of soil falling on a coffin.

John Storm was no coward, but a certain tremor passed over him on

finding himself in this subterranean lurking-place of men who were as

beasts. He stood a full minute unseen. Then he heard the woman say in

a low hiss, “Cat's mee-e-et!” and he knew he had been observed. The men

turned and looked at him, not suddenly, or all at once, but furtively,

cautiously, slowly. The banker crouched at the table with an astonished

face and tried to smuggle the cards out of sight.

John stood calmly, his whole figure displaying courage and confidence.

The group of men broke up. “He's got the 'coppers,'” said one. Nobody

else spoke, and they began to melt away. They disappeared through a

door at the back which led into a yard, for, like rats, the human vermin

always have a second way out of their holes.

In half a minute the cellar was nearly empty. Only the banker and the

woman and one young man remained. The young man was Charlie.

“What cheer, myte?” he said with an air of unconcern. “Is it trecks ye

want, sir? Here ye are then,” and he threw a pack of cards at John's

feet.

“It's that gel o' yawn that's done this,” said the woman.

“So it's a got-up thing, is it?” said Charlie, and stepping to the

counter, he took up a drinking-glass, broke it at the rim; and holding

its jagged edges outward, turned to use it as a weapon.

John Storm had not yet spoken, but a magnetic instinct warned him. He

whistled, and the dog bounded down. The young man threw his broken glass

on the floor and cried to the keeper of the house: “Don't stir, you!

First you know, the beast will be at yer throat!”

Hearing Charlie's voice, Aggie was creeping down the stairs. “Charlie!”

she cried. Charlie threw open his coat, stuck his fingers in the

armholes of his waistcoat, said in a voice of hatred, passion, and rage,

“Go and pawn yourself!” and then swaggered out at the back door. The

keeper made show of following, but John Storm called on him to stop. The

man looked at the dog and obeyed. “Wot d'ye want o' me?” he said.

“I want this girl's baby. That's the first thing I want. I'll tell you

the rest afterward.”

“Oh, that's it, is it?” The man's grimace was frightful.

“It's gone, sir. We've lost it,” said the woman, with a hideous

expression.

“That story will not pass with me, my good woman. Go upstairs and unlock

the door! You too, my man, go on!”

A minute later they were in a bedroom above. Three neglected children

lay asleep on bundles of rags. One of twelve months' old was in a wicker

cradle, one of three years was in a wooden cot, and a younger child was

in a bed. Aggie had come up behind, and stood by the door trembling and

weeping.

“Now, my girl, find your baby,” said John, and the young mother hurried

with eager eyes from the cradle to the cot and from the cot to the bed.

“Yes, here it is,” she cried. “No--oh no, no!” and she began to wring

her hands.

“Told yer so,” said the woman, and with a wicked grin she pointed to a

memorial card which hung on the wall.

Aggie's child was dead and buried. Diarrhoea! The doctor at the

dispensary had given a certificate of death, and Charlie had shared the

insurance money. “Wish to Christ it was ended!” he had said. He had been

drunk ever since.

The poor girl was stunned. She was no longer crying. “Oh, oh, oh! What

shall I do?” she said.

“Who's child is this?” said John, standing over the wicker cradle. The

little sufferer from inflamed gums had sobbed itself to sleep.

“A real laidy's,” said the woman. “Mrs. Jupe told us to tyke great kear

of it. The father is Lord something.”

“My poor girl,” said John, turning to Aggie, “could you carry this child

home for me?”

“Oh, oh, oh!” said the girl, but she wrapped the shawl about the child

and lifted it up sleeping.

“Now, you down't!” said the man, putting himself on guard before the

door. “That child is worth 'undrids of pounds to me, and----”

“Stand back, you brute!” said John, and with the girl and her burden he

passed out of the house.

The front door stood open and the neighbourhood had been raised.

Trollopy women in their under-petticoats and with their hair hanging

about their necks were gathered at the end of the court. Aggie was

crying again, and John pushed through the crowd without speaking.

They went back by Broad Sanctuary, where a solitary policeman was pacing

to and fro on the echoing pavement. Big Ben was chiming the half-hour

after midnight. The child coughed like a sheep constantly, and Aggie

kept saying, “Oh, oh, oh!”

Mrs. Pincher, in her widow's cap and white apron, was waiting up for

them, and John committed the child to her keeping. Then he said to

Aggie, who was turning away, “My poor child, you have suffered deeply,

but if you will leave this man I will help you to begin life again, and

if you want money I will find it.”

“Well, he \_is\_ a Father and no mistake!” said Mrs. Pincher; but the girl

only answered in a hopeless voice, “I don't want no money, and I don't

want to begin life again.”

As she crossed the court to her room in the tenement house they heard

her “Oh, oh, oh!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Before going to bed that night John Storm wrote to Glory:

“Hurrah! Have got poor Polly's baby, so you may set your heart at ease

about it. All the days of my life I have been thought to be a dreamer,

but it is surprising what a man can do when he sets to work for somebody

else! Your former landlady turns out to be the wife of my 'organ man,'

and it was pitiful to see the dear old simpleton's devotion to his bogus

little baggage. I have lost him, of course, but that was unavoidable.

“It was by help of another victim that I traced the child at last. She

is a ballet girl of some sort, and it was as much as I could stand to

see the poor young thing carrying Polly's baby, her own being dead and

buried without a word said to her. Short of the grace of God she will

go to the bad now. Oh, when will the world see that in dealing with the

starved hearts of these poor fallen creatures God Almighty knows best

how to do his own business? Keep the child with the mother, foster the

maternal instinct, and you build up the best womanhood. Drag them apart,

and the child goes to the dogs and the mother to the devil.

“But Polly's baby is safely lodged with Mrs. Pincher, a dear old

grandmotherly soul who will love it like her own, and all the way home I

have been making up my mind to start baby-farming myself on fresh lines.

He who wrongs the child commits a crime against the State. However low a

woman has fallen, she is a subject of the Crown, and if she is a

mother she is the Crown's creditor. These are my first principles, the

application will come anon. Meantime you have given me a new career, a

glorious mission! Thank God and Glory Quayle for it for ever and ever!

Then--who knows?--perhaps you will come back and take it up yourself

some day. When I think of the precious time I spent, in that monastery

... but no, only for that I should not be here.

“Oh, life is wonderful! But I feel afraid that I shall wake up--perhaps

in the streets somewhere--and find I have been dreaming. Deeply grieved

to hear of the grandfather's attack. Trust it has passed. But if not,

certain I am that all is well with him and that he is staid only on God.

“Hope you are well and plodding through this wilderness in comfort,

avoiding the thorns as well as you can. Glenfaba may be dull, but you do

well to keep out of the whirlpool of London for the present. Yours is a

snug spot, and when storms are blowing even the sea-gulls shelter about

your house, I remember ... But why Rosa? Is Peel the only place for a

summer holiday?”

IX.

“Glenfaba.

“Oh, my dear John Storm, is it coals of fire you are heaping on my head,

or fire of brimstone? Your last letter with its torrents of enthusiasm

came sweeping down on me like a flood. What work you are in the midst

of! What a life! What a purpose! While I--I am lying here like an old

slipper thrown up oil the sea-beach. Oh, the pity oft, the pity oft!

It must be glorious to be in the rush and swirl of all this splendid

effort, whatever comes of it! One's soul is thrilled, one's heart

expands! As for me, the garden of my mind is withering, and I am

consuming the seed I ought to sow.

“Rosa has come. She has been here a month nearly, and is just charming,

say what you will. Her thoughts have the dash of the great world, and I

love to hear her talk. True, she troubles me sometimes, but that's

only my envy and malice and all uncharitableness. When she tells of

Betty-this and Ellen-that, and their wonderful successes and triumphs,

I'm the meanest sinner that crawls.

“It's funny to see how the old folk bear themselves toward her. Aunt

Rachel regards her as a sort of an artist, and is clearly afraid

that she will break out into madness in spots somewhere. Aunt Anna

disapproves of her hair, which is brushed up like a man's, and of

her skirt, which 'would be no worse if it were less like a pair of

breeches,' for she has brought her 'bike.' She talks on dangerous

subjects also, and nobody did such things in auntie's young days.

Then she addresses the old girlies as I do, and calls grandfather

'G-rand-dad,' and like the witch of Endor generally, is possessed of a

familiar spirit. Of course I give her various warning looks from time to

time lest the fat should be in the fire, but she's a woman, bless her!

and it's as true as ever it was that a woman can keep the secret she

doesn't know.

“Yes, the ideal of womanhood has changed since the old aunties were

young; but when I listen to Rosa and then look over at Rachel with her

black ringlets, and at Anna with her old-fashioned 'front,' I shudder

and ask myself, 'Why do I struggle?' What is the reward if one gives up

the fascination of life and the world? There is no reward. Nothing but

solitary old-maidism, unless two of you happen to be sisters, for who

else will join her shame to yours? Dreams, dreams, only dreams of the

dearest thing that ever comes into a woman's arms--and then you awake

and there is no one there. A dame's school, when the old father is

gone, but no children of your own to love you, nobody to think of you,

scraping a little here, pinching a little there, growing older and

smaller year by year, looking yellow and craned like an apple that has

been kept on the top shelf too long, and then--the end!

“Oh, but I'm trying so hard, so very hard, to be 'true to the higher

self in me,' because somebody says I must. What do you think I did last

week? In my character of Lady Bountiful I gave an old folks' supper in

the soup kitchen, understood to be in honour of my return. Roast beef

and plum duff, not to speak of pipes and 'baccy, and forty old people of

both sexes sitting down to 'the do.' After supper there was a concert,

when Chaise (the fat old thief!) overflowed the 'elber' chair, and

alluded to me as 'our beautiful donor,' and lured me into singing

Mylecharaine, and leading the company, when we closed with the doxology.

“But 'it was not myself at all, Molly dear, 'twas my shadow on the

wall,' and in any case man can't live by soup kitchens alone--nor woman

either. And knowing what a poor, weak, vain woman I am at the best,

I ask myself sometimes would it not be a thousand times better if I

yielded to my true nature instead of struggling to realize a bloodless

ideal that is not me in the least, but only my picture in the heart of

some one who thinks me so much better than I am?

“Not that anybody ever sees what a hypocrite I can be, though I came

near to letting the cat out of the bag as lately as last night. You must

know that when I turned my back on London at the command of John Knox

the second, I brought all my beautiful dresses along with me, except

such of them as were left at the theatre. Yet I daren't lay them out in

the drawers, so I kept them under lock and key in my boxes. There

they lurked like evil spirits in ambush, and as often as their perfume

escaped into the room my eyes watered for another sight of them! But in

spite of all temptation I resisted, I conquered, I triumphed--until last

night when Rosa talked of Juliet, what a glorious creature she was, and

how there was nobody on the stage who could 'look' her and 'play' her

too!

“What do you think I did? Shall I tell you? Yes, I will. I crept

upstairs to my quiet little room, tugged the box from its hiding-place

under the bed, drew out my dresses--my lovely, lovely brocades--and put

them on! Then I spoke the potion speech, beginning in a whisper, but

getting louder as I went on, and always looking at myself in the glass.

I had blown out the candle, and there was no light in the room but the

moon that was shining on my face, but I was glowing, my very soul was

afire, and when I came to the end I drew myself up with eyes closed

and head thrown back and heart that paused a beat or two, and said,

'\_I\_--\_I\_ am Juliet, for I am a great actress!'

“Oh, oh, oh! I could scream with laughter to think of what happened

next! Suddenly I became aware of somebody knocking at my door (I

had locked it) and of a thin voice outside saying fretfully: 'Glory,

whatever is it? Aren't you well, Glory?' It was the little auntie; and

thinking what a shock she would have if I opened the door and she came

upon this grand Italian lady instead of poor little me, I had to laugh

and to make excuses while I smuggled off my gorgeous things and got back

into my plain ones!

“It was a narrow squeak; but I had a narrower one some days before. Poor

grandfather! He regards Rosa as belonging to a superior race, and loves

to ask her what she thinks of Glory. He has grown quite simple lately,

and as soon as he thinks my back is turned he is always saying, 'And

what is your opinion of my granddaughter, Miss Macquarrie?' To which she

answers, 'Glory is going to make your name immortal, Mr. Quayle.' Then

his eyes sparkle and he says, 'Do you think so?--do you really think

so?' Whereupon she talks further balderdash, and the dear old darling

smiles a triumphant smile!

“But I always notice that not long afterward his eyes look wet and his

head hangs low, and he is saying to the aunties, with a crack in his

voice: 'She'll go away again. You'll see she will. Her beauty and her

talents belong to the world.' And then I burst in on them and scold

them, and tell them not to talk nonsense.

“Nevertheless he is beginning to regard Rosa with suspicion, as if she

were a witch luring me away, and one evening last week we had to steal

into the garden to talk that we might escape from his watchful eyes. The

sun had set--there was the red glow behind the castle across the sky

and the sea, and we were walking on the low path by the river under the

fuchsia hedge that hangs over from the lawn, you know. Rosa was talking

with her impetuous dash of the great career open to any one who could

win the world in London, how there were people enough to help her on,

rich men to find her opportunities, and even to take theatres for her if

need be. And I was hesitating and halting and stammering: 'Yes, yes, if

it were the \_regular\_ stage ... who knows? ... perhaps it might not

be opened to the same objections, ...' when suddenly the leaves of the

fuchsia rustled as with a gust of wind, and we heard footsteps on the

path above.

“It was the grandfather, who had come out on Rachel's arm and overheard

what I had said! 'It's Glory!' he faltered, and then I heard him take

his snuff and blow his nose as if to cover his confusion, thinking I was

deceiving them and carrying on a secret intercourse. I hardly know what

happened next, except that for the five minutes following 'the great

actress' had to talk with the tongues of men and angels (Beelzebub's) in

order to throw dust in the dear old eyes and drive away their doubts. It

was a magnificent performance, 'you go bail.' I'll never do the like of

it again, though I had only one old man and one old maid and one

young woman for audience. The house 'rose' at me too, and the poor old

grandfather was appeased. But when we were back indoors I overheard

him saying: 'After all there's no help for it. She's dull with us--what

wonder! We can't cage our linnet, Rachel, and perhaps we shouldn't try.

A song-bird came to cheer us, but it will fly away. We are only old

folks, dear--it's no use crying.' And on going to his room that night he

closed his door and said his prayers in a whisper, that I might not hear

him when he sobbed.

“He hasn't left his bed since. I fear he never will More than once I

have been on the point of telling him there is no reason to think the

deluge would come if I \_did\_, go back to London; but I will never leave

him now. Yet I wish Aunt Rachel wouldn't talk so much of the days when I

went away before. It seems that every night, on his way to his own room,

he used to step into my empty one and come out with his eyes dim and

his lips moving. I am not naturally hard-hearted, but I can't love

grandfather like that. Oh, the cruelty of life! ... I know it ought to

be the other way about; ... but I can't help it.

“All the same I could cry to think how short life is, and how little

of it I can spare. 'Cling fast to me and hold me,' my heart is always

saying, but meantime London is calling to me, calling to me, like the

sea, and I feel as if I were a wandering mermaid and she were my ocean

home.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Later.--Poor, poor grandfather! I was interrupted in the writing of my

letter this morning by another of those sudden alarms. He had fainted

again, and it is extraordinary how helpless the aunties are in a case of

illness. Grandfather knows it too; and after I had done all I could to

bring him round, he opened his eyes and whispered that he had something

to say to me alone. At that the poor old things left the room with tears

of woe and a look of understanding. Then fetching a difficult breath he

said, '\_You\_ are not afraid, Glory, are you?' and I answered him 'No,'

though my heart was trembling. And then a feeble smile struggled through

the wan features of his drawn face, and he told me his attack was only

another summons. 'I'll soon die for good,' he said, 'and you must be

strong and brave, my child, for death is the common lot, and then what

is there to fear?' I didn't try to contradict him--what was the good of

doing that? And after he had spoken of the coming time he talked quietly

of his past life, how he had weathered the storm for seventy odd years,

and his Almighty Father was bringing him into harbour at last. 'I can't

pray for life any longer, Glory. Many a time I did so in the old days

when I had to bring up my little granddaughter, but my task is over now,

and after the day is done where is the tired labourer who does not lie

down to his rest with a will?'

“The doctor has been and gone. There is no ailment, and nothing to be

done or hoped. It is only a general failure and a sinking earthward of

the poor worn-out body as the soul rises to the heaven that is waiting

to receive it. What a pagan I feel beside him! And how glad I am that

I didn't talk of leaving him again when he was on the eve of his far

longer journey! I have sent the aunties to bed, but Rosa has made

me promise to awaken her at four, that she may take her turn at his

bedside.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Next Morning.--Rosa relieved me during the night, and I came to my

room and lay down in the dullness of the dawn. But now I am sorry that

I allowed her to do so, for I did not sleep, and grandfather appears

to have been troubled with dreams. I fancied he shuddered a little as I

left them together, and more than once through the wall I heard him cry,

'Bring him back!' in the toneless voice of one who is labouring under

the terrors of a nightmare. But each time I heard Rosa comforting him,

so I lay down again without going in.

“Being stronger this morning, he has been propped up in bed writing

a letter. When he called for the pens and paper I asked if I couldn't

write it for him, but the old darling made a great mystery of the

matter, and looked artful, and asked if it was usual to fight your enemy

with his own powder and shot. Of course I humoured him and pretended to

be mighty curious, though I think I know who the letter was written to,

all the same that he kept the address side of the envelope hidden even

when the front of it was being sealed. He sealed it with sealing-wax,

and I held the candle while he did so, with his poor trembling fingers

in danger from the light, and then I stamped it with my mother's pearl

ring, and he smuggled it under the pillow.

“Since breakfast he has shown an increased inclination to doze, but

there have been visits from the wardens and from neighbouring parsons,

for a \_locum tenens\_ has had to be appointed. Of course, they have all

inquired where his pain is, and on being told that he has none, they

have gone downstairs cackling and clucking and crowing in various

versions of 'Praise God for that!' I hate people who are always singing

the doxology.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Noon.--Condition unchanged, except that in the intervals of drowsiness

his mind has wandered a little. He appears to live in the past. Looking

at me with conscious eyes, he calls me 'Lancelot'--my father's name.

It has been so all the morning. One would think he was walking in a

twilight land where he mistakes people's faces and the dead are as much

alive as the living.

“They all think I am brave, oh, so brave! because I do not cry now, as

everybody else does--even Aunt Anna behind her apron--although my tears

can flow so easily, and at other times I keep them constantly on

tap. But I am really afraid, and down at the bottom of my heart I am

terrified. It is just as if \_something\_ were coming into the house

slowly, irresistibly, awfully, and casting its shadow on the floor

already.

“I have found out the cause of his outcries in the night. Aunt Rachel

says he was dreaming of my father's departure for Africa. That was

twenty-two years ago, but it seems that the memory of the last day has

troubled him a good deal lately. 'Don't you remember it?' he has been

saying. 'There were no railways in the island then, and we stood at the

gate to watch the coach that was taking him away. He sat on the top

and waved his red handkerchief. And when he had gone, and it was no use

watching, we turned back to the house--you and Anna and poor, pretty

young Elise. He never came back, and when Glory goes again she'll never

come back either.'

“In the intervals of his semi-consciousness, when he mistakes me for

my father, my wonderful bravery often fails me, and I find excuses for

going out of the room. Then I creep noiselessly through the house and

listen at half-open doors. Just now I heard him talking quite rationally

to Rachel, but in a voice that seemed to speak inwardly, not outwardly,

as before. 'She can't help it, poor child!' he said. 'Some day she'll

know what it is, but not yet, not until she has a child of her own. The

race looks forward, not backward. God knew when he created us that the

world couldn't go on without that bit of cruelty, and who am I that I

should complain?'

“I couldn't bear it any longer, and with a pain at my heart I ran in and

cried, 'I'll never leave you, grandfather.' But he only smiled and said,

'I'll not be keeping you long, Glory, I'll not be keeping you long,' and

then I could have died for shame.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Evening.--All afternoon he has been like a child, and everything

present to his consciousness seems to have been reversed. The shadow of

eternity appears to have wiped out time. When I have raised him up in

bed he has delighted to think he was a little boy in his young mother's

arms. Oh, sweet dream! The old man with his furrowed forehead and

beautiful white head and all the heavy years rolled back! More than

once he has asked me if he may play till bedtime, and I have stroked his

wrinkled hands and told him 'Yes,' for I pretend to be his mother, who

died, when she was old.

“But the 'part' is almost too much for me, and, lest I should break down

under the strain of it, I am going out of his room constantly. I have

just been into his study. It is as full as ever of his squeezes and

rubbings and plaster casts and dusty old runes. He has spent all his

life away back in the tenth century, and now he is going farther,

farther....

“Oh, I'm aweary, aweary! If anything happens to grandfather I shall soon

leave this place; there will be nothing to hold me here any longer,

and besides I could not bear the sight of these evidences of his gentle

presence, so simple, so touching. But what a vain thing London is with

all its vast ado--how little, how pitiful!

\* \* \* \* \*

“Later.--It is all over! The curtain has fallen, and I am not crying.

If I did cry it would not be from grief, but because the end was so

beautiful, so glorious! It was at sunset, and the streamers of the sun

were coming horizontally into the room. He awoke from a long drowsiness,

and a serenity almost angelic overspread his face. I could see that he

was himself once again. Death had led him back through the long years

since he was a child, and he knew he was an old man and I a young woman.

'Have the boats gone yet?' he asked, meaning the herring boats that go

at sunset. I looked out and told him they were at the point of going.

'Let me see them sail,' he said, so I slipped my arms about him and

raised him until he was sitting up and could see down the length of the

harbour and past the castle to the sea. The reflection of the sunlight

was about his silvery old head, and over the damps and chills of death

it made a radiance on his face like a light from heaven. There was

hardly a breeze, and the boats were dropping down from their berths with

their brown sails half set. 'Ah,' he said, 'it's the other way with me,

Glory. I'm coming in, not going out. I've been beating to windward all

my life, but I see the harbour on my lee-bow at last as plainly as I

ever saw Peel, and now I'm only waiting for the top of the tide and the

master of the port to run up the flag!'

“Then his head fell gently back on my arm and his lips changed colour,

but his eyes did not close, and over his saintly face there passed a

fleeting smile. Thus died a Christian gentleman--a simple, sunny, merry,

happy, childlike creature, and of such are the kingdom of heaven.

“Glory.”

\* \* \* \* \*

\_Parson Quayle's Letter.\_

“Dear John: Before this letter reaches you, or perhaps along with it,

you will receive the news that tells you what it is. I am 'in,' John; I

can say no more than that. The doctor tells me it may be now or then or

at any time. But I am looking for my enlargement soon, and whether it

comes to-morrow sunset or with to-day's next tide I leave myself in His

hands in whose hands we all are. Well has the wise man said, 'The day

of our death is better than the day of our birth, so with all good will,

and what legacy of strength old age has left to me, I send you my last

word and message.

“My poor old daughters are sorely stricken, but Glory is still brave and

true, being, as she always was, a quivering bow of steel. People tell

me that the poor mother is strong in the girl, and the spirit of the

mother's race; but well I know the father's stalwart soul supports her;

and I pray God that when my dark hour comes her loving and courageous

arms may be around me.

“That brings me to the object of my letter. This living will soon be

vacant, and I am wondering who will follow in my feeble steps. It is

a sweet spot, John! The old church does not look so ill when the sun

shines on it, and in the summer-time this old garden is full of fruit

and flowers. Did I ever tell you that Glory was born here? I never had

another grandchild, and we were great comrades from the first. She was a

wise and winsome little thing, and I was only an old child myself, so we

had many a run and romp in these grounds together. When I try to think

of the place without her it is a vain effort and a painful one; and even

while she was away in your great and wicked Babylon, with its dangers

and temptations, her little ghost seemed to lurk at the back of every

bush and tree, and sometimes it would leap out on me and laugh.

“It is months since I saw your father, but they tell me he has lately

burned his bureau, making one vast bonfire of the gatherings of twenty

years. That is not such ill news either; and maybe, now the great ado

that worked such woe is put by and gone, he would rejoice to see you

back at home, and open his hungering arms to you.

“But my eyes ache and my pen is shaking. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

An old man leaves you his blessing, John. God grant that in his own good

time we may meet in a blessed paradise, rejoicing in his gracious mercy,

and all our sins forgiven!

“Adam Quayle.”

X.

Glory's letter and its inclosure fell on John Storm like rain in the

face of a man on horseback--he only whipped up and went faster.

“How can I find words,” he wrote, “to express what I feel at your

mournful news? Yet why mournful? His life's mission was fulfilled, his

death was a peaceful victory, and we ought to rejoice that he was so

easily released. I trust you will not mourn too heavily for him, or

allow his death to stop your life. It would not be right. No trouble

came near his stainless heart, no shadow of sin; his old age was a

peaceful day which lasted until sunset. He was a creature that had no

falsetto in a single fibre of his being, no shadow of affectation. He

kept like this through all our complicated existence in this artificial

world, absolutely unconscious of the hollowness and pretension and sham

that surrounded him--tolerant, too, and kind to all. Then why mourn for

him? He is gathered in--he is safe.

“His letter was touching in its artful simplicity. It was intended to

ask me to apply for his living. But my duty is here, and London must

make the best of me. Yet more than ever now I feel my responsibility

with regard to yourself. The time is not ripe to advise you. I am on

the eve of a great effort. Many things have to be tried, many things

attempted. It is a gathering of manna--a little every day. To God's

keeping and protection meantime I commit you. Comfort your aunts, and

let me know if there is anything that can be done for them.”

The ink of this letter was hardly dry when John Storm was in the middle

of something else. He was in a continual fever now. Above all, his great

scheme for the rescue and redemption of women and children possessed

him. He called it Glory's scheme when he talked of it to himself. It

might be in the teeth of nineteenth-century morality, but what matter

about that? It was on the lines of Christ's teaching when he forgave the

woman and shamed the hypocrites. He would borrow for it, beg for it, and

there might be conditions under which he would steal for it too.

Mrs. Callender shook her head.

“I much misdoubt there'll be scandal, laddie. It's a woman's work, I'm

thinking.”

“'Be thou as chaste as ice,' auntie, 'as pure as snow' ... but no

matter! I intend to call out the full power of a united Church into the

warfare against this high wickedness. Talk of the union of Christendom!

If we are in earnest about it we'll unite to protect and liberate our

women.”

“But where's the siller to come frae, laddie?”

“Anywhere--everywhere! Besides, I have a bank I can always draw on,

auntie.”

“You're no meaning the Prime Minister again, surely?”

“I mean the King of Kings. God will provide for me, in this, as in

everything.”

Thus his reckless enthusiasm bore down everything, and at the back of

all his thoughts was the thought of Glory. He was preparing a way for

her; she was coming back to a great career, a glorious mission; her

bright soul would shine like a star; she would see that he had been

right, and faithful, and then--then----But it was like wine coursing

through his veins--he could not think of it.

Three thousand pounds had to be found to buy or build homes with, and he

set out to beg for the money. His first call was at Mrs. Macrae's. Going

up to the house, he met the lady's poodle in a fawn-coloured wrap coming

out in charge of a footman for its daily walk round the square.

He gave the name of “Father Storm,” and after some minutes of waiting he

was told that the lady had a headache and was not receiving that day.

“Say the nephew of the Prime Minister wishes to see her,” said John.

Before the footman had returned again there was the gentle rustle of a

dress on the stairs, and the lady herself was saying: “Dear Mr. Storm,

come up. My servants are real tiresome, they are always confusing

names.”

Time had told on her; she was looking elderly, and the wrinkles about

her eyes could no longer be smoothed out. But her “front” was curled,

and she was still saturated in perfume.

“I heard of your return, dear Mr. Storm,” she said, in the languid voice

of the great lady, but the accent of St. Louis, as she led the way

to the drawing-room. “My daughter told me about it. She was always

interested in your work, you know.... Oh, yes, quite well, and having

a real good time in Paris. Of course, you know she has been married. A

great loss to me naturally, but being God's will I felt it was my

duty as a mother----” and then a pathetic description of her maternal

sentiments, consoled by the circumstance that her son-in-law belonged

to “one of the best families,” and that she was constantly getting

newspapers from “the other side” containing full accounts of the wedding

and of the dresses that were worn at it.

John twirled his hat in his hand and listened.

“And what are your dear devoted people doing down there in Soho?”

Then John told of his work for working girls, and the great lady

pretended to be deeply interested. “Why, they'll soon be better than the

upper classes,” she said.

John thought it was not improbable, but he went on to tell of his

scheme, and how small was the sum required for its execution.

“Only three thousand! That ought to be easily fixed up. Why, certainly!”

“Charity is the salt of riches, madam, and if rich people would remember

that their wealth is a trust----”

“I do--I always do. 'Lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth'--what

a beautiful text \_that\_ is!”

“I'm glad to hear you say so, madam. So many Christian people allow that

God is the God of the widow and fatherless, while the gods they really

worship are the gods of silver and gold.”

“But I love the dear children, and I like to go to the institution to

see them in their nice white pinafores making their curtsies. But what

you say is real true, Mr. Storm; and since I came from Sent Louis I've

seen considerable people who are that silly about cats----” and then a

long story of the folly of a lady friend who once had a pet Persian, but

it died, and she wore crape for it, and you could never mention a cat in

her hearing afterward.

At that moment the poodle came back from its walk, and the lady called

it to her, fondled it affectionately, said it was a present from

her poor dear husband, and launched into an account of her anxieties

respecting it, being delicate and liable to colds, notwithstanding the

trousseau (it was a lady poodle) which the fashionable dog tailor in

Regent Street had provided for it.

John got up to take his leave. “May I then count on your kind support on

behalf of our poor women and children of Soho?”

“Ah, of course, that matter--well, you see the Archdeacon kindly comes

to talk 'City' with me--in fact, I'm expecting him to-day--and I never

do anything without asking his advice, never, in my present state of

health--I have a weak heart, you know,” with her head aside and her

saturated pocket-handkerchief at her nose. “But has the Prime Minister

done anything?”

“He has advanced me two thousand pounds.”

“Really?” rising and kicking back her train. “Well, as I say, we ought

to fix it right away. Why not hold a meeting in my drawing-room? All

denominations, you say? I don't mind--not in a cause like that,” and

she glanced round her room as if thinking it was always possible to

disinfect it afterward.

Somebody was coughing loudly in the hall as John stepped downstairs. It

was the Archdeacon coming in. “Ah,” he exclaimed, with a flourish of the

hand, greeting John as if they had parted yesterday and on the best of

terms. Yes, there \_had\_ been changes, and he was promoted to a sphere of

higher usefulness. True, his good friends had looked for something still

higher, but it was the premier archdeaconry at all events, and in the

Church, as in life generally, the spirit of compromise ruled everything.

He asked what John was doing, and on being told he said, with a somewhat

more worldly air, “Be careful, my dear Storm, don't encourage vice. For

my part, I am tired of the 'fallen sister.' To tell you the truth, I

deny the name. The painted Jezebel of the Piccadilly pavement is no

sister of mine.”

“We don't choose our relations, Archdeacon,” said John. “If God is our

Father, then all men are our brothers, and all women are our sisters

whether we like it or not.”

“Ah! The same man still, I see. But we will not quarrel about words.

Seen the dear Prime Minister lately? Not \_very\_ lately? Ah, well”--with

a superior smile--“the air of Downing Street--it's so bad for the

memory, they say,” and coughing loudly again, he stepped upstairs.

John Storm went home that day light-handed but with a heavy heart.

“Begging is an ill trade on a fast day, laddie,” said Mrs. Callender.

“Sit you down and tak' some dinner.”

“How dare these people pray, 'Our Father which art in heaven?' It's

blasphemy! It's deceit!”

“Aye, and they would deceive God about their dividends if he couldn't

see into their safes.”

“Their money is the meanest thing Heaven gives them. If I asked them for

their health or their happiness, Lord God, what would they say?”

On the Sunday night following John Storm preached to an overflowing

congregation from the text, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their

mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”

But a few weeks afterward his face was bright and his voice was cheery,

and he was writing another letter to Glory:

“In full swing at last, Glory. To carry out my new idea I had to get

three thousand pounds more of my mother's money from my uncle. He gave

it up cheerfully, only saying he was curious to see what approach to

the Christian ideal the situation of civilization permitted. But Mrs.

Callender is \_dour\_, and every time I spend sixpence of my own money on

the Church she utters withering sarcasms about being only a 'daft auld

woman hersel',' and then I have to caress and coax her.

“The newspapers were facetious about my 'Baby Houses' until they scented

the Prime Minister at the back of them, and now they call them the

'Storm Shelters,' and christen my nightly processions 'The White-cross

Army.' Even the Archdeacon has begun to tell the world how he 'took an

interest' in me from the first and gave me my title. I met him again the

other day at a rich woman's house, where we had only one little spar,

and yesterday he wrote urging me to 'organize my great effort,' and have

a public dinner in honour of its inauguration. I did not think God's

work could be well done by people dining in herds and drinking bottles

of champagne, but I showed no malice. In fact, I agreed to hold a

meeting in the lady's drawing-room, to which clergymen, laymen, and

members of all denominations are being invited, for this is a cause that

rises above all differences of dogma, and I intend to try what can be

done toward a union of Christendom on a social basis. Mrs. Callender is

dour on that subject too, reminding me that where the carcass is there

will the eagles be gathered together. The Archdeacon thinks we must have

the meeting before the twelfth of August, or not until after the middle

of September, and Mrs. Callender understands this to mean that 'the Holy

Ghost always goes to sleep in the grouse season.'

“Meantime my Girls' Club goes like a forest fire. We are in our

renovated clergy-house at last, and have everything comfortable. Two

hundred members already, chiefly dressmakers and tailors, and girls

out of the jam and match factories. The bright, merry young things,

rejoicing in their brief blossoming time between girlhood and womanhood.

I love to be among them and to look at their glistening eyes! Mrs.

Callender blows withering blasts on this head also, saying it is

no place for a 'laddie,' whereupon I lie low and think much but say

nothing.

“Our great night is Sunday night after service. Yes, indeed, Sunday!

That's just when the devil's houses are all open round about us, and why

should God's house be shut up? It is all very well for the people who

have only one Sabbath in the week to keep it wholly holy--I have seven,

being a follower of Jesus, not of Moses. But the rector of the parish

has begun to complain of my 'intrusion,' and to tell the Bishop I ought

to be 'mended or ended.' It seems that my 'doings' are 'indecent and

unnecessary,' and my sermons are 'a violation of all the sanctities,

all the modesties of existence.' Poor dumb dog, teaching the Gospel of

Don't! The world has never been reformed by 'resignation' to the evils

of life, or converted by 'silence' either.

“How I wish you were here, in the midst of it all! And--who

knows?--perhaps you will be some day yet. Do not trouble to answer

this--I will write again soon, and may then have something practical to

say to you. \_Au revoir!\_”

XI.

On the day of the drawing-room meeting a large company gathered in

the hall at Belgrave Square. Lady Robert Ure, back from the honeymoon,

received the guests for her mother, whose weak heart and a headache kept

her upstairs. Her husband stood aside, chewing the end of his mustache

and looking through his eyeglass with a gleam of amused interest in his

glittering eye. There were many ladies, all fashionably dressed, and

one of them wore a seagull's wing in her hat, with part of the root left

visible and painted red to show that it had been torn out of the living

bird. The men were nearly all clergymen, and the cut of their cloth and

the fashions of their ties indicated the various complexions of their

creeds. They glanced at each other with looks of embarrassment, and Mrs.

Callender, who came in like a breeze off a Scottish moor, said audibly

that she had never seen “sae many craws on one tree before.” The

Archdeacon was there with his head up, talking loudly to Lady Robert.

She stood motionless in her place, never turning her head toward John

Storm, though it was plain that she was looking at him constantly. More

than once he caught an expression of pain in her face, and felt pity for

her as one of the brides who had acted the lie of marrying without love.

But his spirits were high. He welcomed everybody, and even bantered Mrs.

Callender when she told him she “objected to the hale thing,” and said,

“Weel, weel, wait a wee.”

The Archdeacon gave the signal and led the way with Lady Robert to the

drawing-room, where Mrs. Macrae, redolent of perfume, was reclining on

a sofa with the “lady poodle” by her side. As soon as the company were

seated the Archdeacon rose and coughed loudly.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he said, “we have no assurance of a blessing

except 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Therefore, before we go further,

it is our duty, as brethren of a common family in Christ, to ask the

blessing of Almighty God on this enterprise.”

There was a subdued rustle of drooping hats and bonnets, when suddenly a

thin voice was heard to say, “Mr. Archdeacon, may I inquire first who is

to ask the blessing?”

“I thought of doing so myself,” said the Archdeacon with a meek smile.

“In that case, as a Unitarian, I must object to an invocation in which I

do not believe.”

There was a half-suppressed titter from the wall at the back, where Lord

Robert Ure was standing with his face screwed up to his eyeglass.

“Well, if the name of our Lord is a stumbling block to our Unitarian,

brother, no doubt the prayer in this instance would be acceptable

without the customary Christian benediction.”

“That's just like you,” said a large man near the door, with whiskers

all round his face. “You've been trimming all your life, and now you are

going to trim away the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“If our Low-Church brother thinks he can do better----”

But John Storm intervened. He had looked icy cold, though the twitching

of his lower lip showed that he was red hot within.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he said in a quavering voice, “I apologize for

bringing you together. I thought if we were in earnest about the union

of Christendom we might at least unite in the real contest with evil.

But I find it is a dream; we have only been trifling with ourselves, and

there is not one of us who wants the union of Christendom, except on the

condition that his rod shall be like Aaron's rod which swallowed up all

the rest. It was a mistake, and I beg your pardon.”

“Yes, sir,” said the Archdeacon, “it \_was\_ a mistake; and if you had

taken my advice from the first, and asked the blessing of God through

good High Churchmen alone----”

“God doesn't wait for any asking,” said John, now flushing up to

the eyes. “He gives freely to High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, and No

Churchmen alike.”

“If that is your opinion, sir, you are no better than some of your

friends, and for my part I will never darken your door again!”

“\_Darken\_ is a good word for it, Archdeacon,” said John, and with that

the company broke up.

Mrs. Macrae looked like a thunder-cloud as John bowed to her on passing

out, but Mrs. Callender cried out in a jubilant voice, “Be skipper

of your ain ship, laddie!” and added (being two yards behind the

Archdeacon's broad back going down the stairs), “If some folks are to

be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven there'll be a michty crush at the

pearly gates, I'm thinking!”

John Storm went back to Soho with a heavy heart. Going up Victoria

Street he passed a crowd of ragged people who were ploughing their way

through the carriages. Two constables were taking a man and woman to the

police court in Rochester Row. The prisoners were Sharkey, the keeper of

the gambling house, and his wife the baby-farmer.

But within a week John Storm, in greater spirits than ever, was writing

to Glory again:

“The Archdeacon has deserted me, but no matter! My uncle has advanced

me another thousand of my mother's money, so the crusade is

\_self\_-supporting in one sense at all events. What a fool I am! Ask Aunt

Anna her opinion of me, or say old Chalse or the village natural--but

never mind! Folly and wisdom are relative terms, and I don't envy the

world its narrow ideas of either. You would be amused to see how the

women of the West End are taking up the movement--Lady Robert Ure among

the rest! They have banded themselves into a Sisterhood, and christened

our clergy-house a 'Settlement.' One of my Greek owners came in the

other evening to see the alterations. His eyes glistened at the change,

and he asked leave to bring a friend. I trust you are well and settling

things comfortably, and that Miss Macquarrie has gone. It is raining

through a colander here, but I have no time to think of depressing

weather. Sometimes when I cross our great squares, where the birds sing

among the yellowing leaves, my mind goes off to your sweet home in the

sunshine; and when I drop into the dark alleys and lanes, where the

pale-faced children play in their poverty and rags, I think of a day

that is coming, and, God willing, is now so near, when a ministering

angel of tenderness and strength will be passing through them like a

gleam. But I am more than ever sure that you do well to avoid for the

present the pompous joys of life in London, where for one happy being

there are a thousand pretenders to happiness.”

On the Sunday night following, Crook Lane, outside the clergy-house, was

almost blocked with noisy people of both sexes. They were a detachment

of the “Skeletons,” and the talk among them was of the trial of the

Sharkeys, which had taken place the day before. “They've 'ed six

menths,” said one. “And it's all along o' minjee parsons,” said another;

and Charlie Wilkes, who had a certain reputation for humour, did a

step-dance and sang some doggerel beginning--

Father Storm is a werry good man,

'E does you all the 'arm 'e can.

Through this crowd two gentlemen pushed their way to the clergy-house,

which was brilliantly lit up. One of them was the Greek owner, the other

was Lord Robert Ure. Entering a large room on the ground floor, they

first came upon John Storm, in cassock and biretta, standing at the door

and shaking hands with everybody who came in and went out. He betrayed

no surprise, but greeted them respectfully and then passed them on.

Every moment of his time was occupied. The room was full of the young

girls of the district, with here and there a Sister out of another

world entirely. Some were reading, some conversing, some laughing, some

playing a piano, and some singing. Their voices filled the air like the

chirping of birds, and their faces were bright and happy. “Good-evening,

Father,” they said on entering, and “Good-night, Father,” as they went

away.

The two men stood some minutes and looked round the room. It was

observed that Lord Robert did not remove his hat. He kept chewing the

end of a broken cigarette, whereof the other end hung down his chin. One

of the Sisters heard him say, “It will do with a little alteration, I

think.” Then he went off alone, and the Greek owner stepped up to John

Storm.

It was not at first that John could attend to him, and when he was able

to do so he began to rattle on about his own affairs. “See,” he said

with a delighted smile and a wave of the arm, “see how crowded we are!

We'll have to think of taking in the next door soon.”

“Father Storm,” said the Greek, “I have something serious to say, though

the official notification will of course reach you by another channel.”

John's face darkened as a ripe cornfield does when the sun dies away

from it.

“I am sorry to tell you that the trustees, having had a favourable offer

for this property----”

“Well?” His great staring eyes had stopped the man.

“----have decided to sell.”

“\_Sell\_? Did you say se----? To whom? What?”

“To tell you the truth, to the syndicate of a music hall.”

John staggered back, breathing audibly. “Now if a man had to believe

that--Do you know if I thought such a thing \_could\_ happen----”

“I'm sorry you take the matter so seriously, Father Storm. It's true

you've spent money on the property, but, believe me, the trustees will

derive no profit----”

“Profit? Money? Do you suppose I'm thinking of that, and not of

the desecration, the outrage, the horror? But who are they? Is that

man--Lord----”

The Greek had nodded his head, and John flung open the door. “Out of

this! Out of it, you Judas!” And almost before the Greek had crossed the

threshold the door was banged at his back.

The incident had been observed, and there was dead silence in the

club-room, but John only cried, “Let's sing something, girls,” and when

a Sister struck up his favourite Nazareth there was no voice so loud as

his.

But he had realized everything. “Gloria” was coming back, and the work

of months was overthrown!

When he was going home groups of the girls were talking in whispers in

the hall, and Mrs. Pincher, who was wiping her eyes at the door, said,

“I wonder you don't drown yourself--I do!”

At the corner of the lane Mr. Jupe was waiting for him to beg his pardon

and to ask his advice. What he had said of Mrs. Jupe had turned out to

be true. The Sharkeys had “split” on her and she had been arrested. “It

was all in the evenin' pipers last night,” the weak creature whimpered,

“and to-day my manager told me I 'ad best look out for another place.

Oh, my poor Lidjer! What am I to do?”

“Do? Cut her off like a rotten bough!” said John scornfully, and with

that he strode down the street. The human sea roared around him, and

he felt as if he wanted to fling himself into the midst of it and be

swallowed up.

On reaching Victoria Square he told Mrs. Callender the news--flung it

out at her with a sort of triumphant shout. His church had been sold

over his head, and being only “Chaplain to the Greek-Turks,” he was to

be turned into the streets. Then he laughed wildly, and by some devilish

impulse began to abuse Glory. “The next chaplain is to be a girl,” he

cried, “one of those creatures who throw kisses at gaping crowds and

sweep curtsies for their dirty crusts.”

But all at once he turned white as a ghost and sat down trembling. Mrs.

Callender's face was twitching, and to prevent herself from crying

she burst into scorching satire. “There!” she said, sitting in her

rocking-chair and rocking herself furiously, “I ken'd weel what it would

come til! Adversity mak's a man wise, they say, if it doesna mak' him

rich. But it's the Prime Minister I blame for this. The auld dolt! he

must be fallen to his dotage. It's enough to mak' a reasonable body go

out of her mind to think of sic wise asses. I told you what to expect,

but you were always miscalling me for a suspicious auld woman. Oh, it's

a thing ye'd no suspect; but Jane Callender is only a daft auld fool, ye

see, and doesna ken what she's saying!”

But at the next moment she had jumped up and flung her arms about John's

neck, and was crying over him like a girl. “Oh, my son! my ain son!

And is it for me to fling out at ye? Aye, aye, it's a heartless world,

laddie!”

He kissed the old woman, and then she tried to coax him to eat. “Come,

come, a wee bittie, just a wee bittie. We must eat our supper anyway.”

“God seems dead and heaven a long way off!” he murmured.

“And a drap o' whisky will do no harm--a wee drappie.”

“There's only one thing clear--God sees I'm unfit for the work, so he

has taken it away from me.”

She turned aside from the table, and the supper was left untouched.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first post next morning brought a letter from Glory.

“The Garden House,

“Clement's Inn, W. C.

“Forgive me! I have returned to town! I couldn't help it, I couldn't, I

couldn't! London dragged me back. What was I to do after everything was

settled and the aunties provided for?--assist in a dame's school and

wage war with pothooks and hangers? Oh! I was dying of weariness--dying,

dying, dying!

“And then they made me such tempting offers. Not the music hall--don't

think that. I dare say you were quite right there. No, but the theatre,

the regular theatre! Mr. Drake has bought some broken-down old place,

and is to turn it into a beautiful theatre expressly for me. I am to

play Juliet. Only think--Juliet!--and in my own theatre! Already I feel

like a liberated slave who has crossed her Red Sea.

“And don't think a woman's mourning is like the silly old laws which

lasted but three days. \_He\_ is buried in my heart, not in the earth,

and I shall love him and revere him always! And then didn't you tell me

yourself it would not be right to allow his death to stop my life?

“Write and say you forgive me, John. Reply by return, and make yourself

your own postman--registered. You'll find me here at Rosa's. Come, come,

come! I'll never forgive you if you don't come soon--never, never!

“Glory.”

XII.

A fortnight had passed, and John Storm had not yet visited Glory.

Nevertheless, he had heard of her from day to day through the medium of

the newspapers. Every morning he had glanced down the black columns for

the name that stood out from them as if its letters had been printed in

blood. The reports had been many and mysterious. First, the brilliant

young artiste, who had made such an extraordinary impression some months

before, had returned to London and would shortly resume the promising

career which had been interrupted by illness and family bereavement.

Next, the forthcoming appearance would be on the regular stage, and in

a Shakespearian character, which was always understood to be a crucial

test of histrionic genius. Then, the revival of Romeo and Juliet, which

had formerly been in contemplation, would probably give way to the still

more ambitious project of an entirely new production by a well-known

Scandinavian author, with a part peculiarly fitted to the personality

and talents of the \_débutante\_. Finally, a syndicate was about to

be formed for the purchase of some old property, with a view to its

reconstruction as a theatre, in the interests of the new play and the

new player.

John Storm laughed bitterly. He told himself that Glory was unworthy of

the least of his thoughts. It was his duty to go on with his work and

think of her no more.

He had received his official notice to quit. The church was to be given

up in a month, the clergy-house in two months, and he believed himself

to be immersed in preparations for the rehousing of the club and home.

Twenty young mothers and their children now lived in the upper rooms,

under obedience to the Sisterhood, but Polly's boy had remained with

Mrs. Pincher. From time to time he had seen the little one tethered to a

chair by a scarf about its waist, creeping by the wall to the door, and

there gazing out on the world with looks of intelligence, and babbling

to it in various inarticulate noises. “Boo-loo! Lal-la! Mum-um!” The

little dark face had the eyes of its mother, but it represented Glory

for all that. John Storm loved to see it. He felt that he could never

part with it, and that if Lord Robert Ure himself came and asked for it

he would bundle him out of doors.

But a carriage drew up at Mrs. Callender's one morning, and Lady Robert

Ure stepped out. Her pale and patient face had the feeble and nervous

smile of the humiliated and unloved.

“Mr. Storm,” she said in her gentle voice, “I have come on a delicate

errand. I can not delay any longer a duty I ought to have discharged

before.”

It was about Polly's baby. She had heard of what had happened at the

hospital; and the newspapers which had followed her to Paris, with

reports of her wedding, had contained reports of the girl's death also.

Since her return she had inquired about the child, and discovered that

it had been rescued by him and was now in careful keeping.

“But it is for me to look after it, Mr. Storm, and I beg of you to give

it up to me. Something tells me that God will never give me children

of my own, so I shall be doing no harm to any one, and my husband need

never know whose child it is I adopt. I promise you to be good to it.

It shall never leave me. And if it should live to be a man, and grow to

love me, that will help me to forget the past and to forgive myself for

my own share in it. Oh, it is little I can do for the poor girl who is

gone--for, after all, she loved him and I took him from her. But this

is my duty, Mr. Storm, and I can not sleep at night or rest in the day

until it is begun.”

“I don't know if it is your duty, dear lady, but if you wish for the

child it is your right,” said John Storm, and they got into the carriage

and drove to Soho.

“Boo-loo! Lal-la! Mum-um!” The child was tethered to the chair as usual

and talking to the world according to its wont. When it was gone and

the women on the doorsteps could see no more of the fine carriage of the

great lady who had brought the odour of perfume and the rustle of silk

into the dingy court, and Mrs. Pincher had turned back to the house

with red eyes and her widow's cap awry, John Storm told himself that

everything was for the best. The last link with Glory was broken! Thank

God for that! He might go on with his work now and need think of her no

more!

That day he called at Clement's Inn.

The Garden House was a pleasant dwelling, fronting on two of its sides

to the garden of the ancient Inn of Chancery, and cosily furnished

with many curtains and rugs. The Cockney maid who answered the door was

familiar in a moment, and during the short passage from the hall to the

floor above she communicated many things. Her name was Liza; she had

heard him preach; he had made her cry; “Miss Gloria” had known her

former mistress, and Mr. Drake had got her the present place.

There was a sound of laughter from the drawing-room. It was Glory's

voice. When the door opened she was standing in the middle of the floor

in a black dress and with a pale face, but her eyes were bright and she

was laughing merrily. She stopped when John Storm entered and looked

confused and ashamed. Drake, who was lounging on the couch, rose and

bowed to him, and Miss Macquarrie, who was correcting long slips of

printer's proofs at a desk by the window, came forward and welcomed him.

Glory held his hand with her long hand-clasp and looked steadfastly into

his eyes. His face twitched and her own blushed deeply, and then she

talked in a nervous and jerky way, reproaching him for his neglect of

her.

“I have been busy,” he began, and then stopped with a sense of

hypocrisy. “I mean worried and tormented,” and then stopped again, for

Drake had dropped his head.

She laughed, though there was nothing to laugh at, and proposed tea,

rattling along in broken sentences that were spoken with a tremulous

trill, which had a suggestion of tears behind it. “Shall I ring for tea,

Rosa? Oh, you \_have\_ rung for tea! Ah, here it comes!--Thank you, Liza.

Set it here,” seating herself. “Now who says the 'girl'? Remember?” and

then more laughter.

At that moment there was another arrival. It was Lord Robert Ure. He

kissed Rosa's hand, smiled on Glory, saluted Drake familiarly, and then

settled himself on a low stool by the tea-table, pulled up the knees of

his trousers, relaxed the congested muscles of one half of his face, and

let fall his eyeglass.

Drake was handing out the cups as Glory filled them. He was looking

at her attentively, vexed at the change in her manner since John Storm

entered. When he returned to his seat on the sofa he began to twitch

the ear of her pug, which lay coiled up asleep beside him, calling it an

ugly little pestilence, and wondering why she carried it about with her.

Glory protested that it was an angel of a dog, whereupon he supposed

it was now dreaming of paradise--listen!--and then there were audible

snores in the silence, and everybody laughed, and Glory screamed.

“I declare, on my honour, my dear,” said Drake with a mischievous look

at John, “the creature is uglier than the beast that did the business on

the day we eloped.”

“Eloped!” cried Rosa and Lord Robert together.

“Why, did you never hear that Glory eloped with me?”

Glory was trying to drown his voice with hollow laughter.

“She was seven and I was six and a half, and she had proposed to me in

the orchard the day before!”

“Anybody have more tea? No? Some sally-lunn, perhaps?” and then more

laughter.

“Hold your tongue, Glory! Nobody wants your tea! Let us hear the story,”

said Rosa.

“Why, yes, certainly,” said Lord Robert, and everybody laughed again.

“She was all for travel and triumphal processions in those days----”

Glory stopped her ears and began to sing:

Willy, Willy Wilkin,

Kissed the maid a-milkin'!

Fa, la la!

“There were so many things people could do if they wouldn't waste so

much time working----”

Willy, Willy Wilkin

Kissed the maid----

“Glory, if you don't be quiet we'll turn you out!” and Rosa got up and

nourished her proofs.

“I had brought my dog, and when I called her a----”

But Glory had leaped to her feet and fled from the room. Drake had

leaped up also, and now, putting his back against the door, he raised

his voice and went on with his story.

“Somebody saved us, though, and she lay in his arms and kissed him all

the way home again.”

Glory was strumming on the door and singing to drown his voice. When

the story was ended and she was allowed to come back she was panting and

gasping with laughter, but there were tears in her eyes for all that,

and Lord Robert was saying, with a sidelong look toward John Storm,

“Really, this ought to be a scene in the new Sigurdsen, don't you know!”

John had retired within himself during this nonsense. He had been

feeling an intense hatred of the two men, and was looking as gloomy as

deep water. “All acting, sheer acting,” he thought, and then he told

himself that Glory was only worthy of his contempt. What could attract

her in the society of such men? Only their wealth, and their social

station. Their intellectual and moral atmosphere must weary and revolt

her.

Rosa had to go to her newspaper office, and Drake saw her to the door.

John rose at the same time, and Glory said, “Going already?” but she did

not try to detain him. She would see him again; she had much to say

to him. “I suppose you were surprised to hear that I had returned to

London?” she said, looking up at his knitted brows.

He did not answer immediately, and Lord Robert, who was leaning against

the chimney-piece, said in his cold drawl, “Your friend ought to be

happy that you have returned to London, seems to me, my dear, instead of

wasting your life in that wilderness.”

John drew himself up. “It's not London I object to,” he said; “that was

inevitable, I dare say.”

“What then?”

“The profession she has come back to follow.”

“Why, what's amiss with the profession?” said Lord Robert, and Drake,

who returned to the room at the moment, said: “Yes, what's amiss with

it? Some of the best men in the world have belonged to it, I think.”

“Tell me the name of one of them, since the world began, who ever lived

an active Christian life.”

Lord Robert made a kink of laughter, and, turning to the window, began

to play a tune with his finger tips on the glass of a pane. Drake

struggled to keep a straight face, and answered, “It is not their rôle,

sir.”

“Very well, if that's too much to ask, tell me how many of them

have done anything in real life, anything for the world, for

humanity--anything whatever, I don't care what it is.”

“You are unreasonable, sir,” said Drake, “and such objections could as

properly apply to the professions of the painter and the musician. These

are the children of joy. Their first function is to amuse. And surely

amusement has its place in real life, as you say.”

“On the contrary,” said John, following his own thought, for he had not

listened, “how many of them have lived lives of reckless abandonment,

self-indulgence, and even scandalous license!”

“Those are abuses that apply equally to other professions, sir. Even the

Church is not free from them. But in the view of reasonable beings one

clergyman of evil life--nay, one hundred--would not make the profession

of the clergy bad.”

“A profession,” said John, “which appeals above all to the senses, and

lives on the emotions, and fosters jealousy and vanity and backbiting,

and develops duplicity, and exists on lies, and does nothing to

encourage self-sacrifice or to help suffering humanity, is a bad

profession and a sinful one!”

“If a profession is sinful,” said Drake, “in proportion as it appeals to

the senses, and lives on the emotions, and develops duplicity, then the

profession of the Church is the most sinful in the world, for it offers

the greatest temptations to lying, and produces the worst hypocrites and

impostors!”

“That,” said John, with eyes flashing and passion vibrating in his

voice--“that, sir, is the great Liar's everlasting lie--and you know

it!”

Glory was between them with uplifted hands. “Peace, peace! Blessed is

the peacemaker! But tea! Will nobody take more tea? Oh, dear! oh, dear!

Why can't we have tea over again?”

“I know what you mean, sir,” said Drake. “You mean that I have brought

Glory back to a life of danger and vanity, and sloth and sensuality.

Very well. I deny your definition. But call it what you will, I have

brought her back to the only life her talents are fit for, and if that's

all----”

“Would you have done the same for your own sister?”

“How dare you introduce my sister's name in this connection?”

“And how dare you resent it? What's good for one woman is good for

another.”

Glory was turning aside, and Drake was looking ashamed. “Of

course--naturally--all I meant,” he faltered--“if a girl has to earn

her living, whatever her talents, her genius--that is one thing. But the

upper classes, I mean the leisured classes----”

“Damn the leisured classes, sir!” said John, and in the silence that

followed the men looked round, but Glory was gone from the room.

Lord Robert, who had been whistling at the window, said to Drake in

a cynical undertone: “The man is hipped and sore. He has lost his

challenge, and we ought to make allowances for him, don't you know.”

Drake tried to laugh. “I'm willing to make allowances,” he said lightly;

“but when a man talks to me as if--as if I meant to----” but the

light tone broke down, and he faced round upon John and burst out

passionately: “What right have you to talk to me like this? What is

there in my character, in my life, that justifies it? What woman's

honour have I betrayed? What have I done that is unworthy of the

character of an English gentleman?”

John took a stride forward and came face to face and eye to eye with

him. “What have you done?” he said. “You have used a woman as your decoy

to win your challenge, as you say, and you have struck me in the face

with the hand of the woman I love! That's what you've done, sir, and

if it's worthy of the character of an English gentleman, then God help

England!”

Drake put his hand to his head and his flushed face turned pale. But

Lord Robert Ure stepped forward and said with a smile: “Well, and if

you've lost your church so much the better. You are only an outsider in

the ecclesiastical stud anyway. Who wants you? Your rector doesn't want

you; your Bishop doesn't want you. Nobody wants you, if you ask me.”

“I don't ask you, Lord Robert,” said John. “But there's somebody who

does want me for all that. Shall I tell you who it is? It's the poor

and helpless girl who has been deceived by the base and selfish man, and

then left to fight the battle of life alone, or to die by suicide and go

shuddering down to hell! That's who wants me, and, God willing, I mean

to stand by her.”

“Damme, sir, if you mean \_me\_, let me tell you what \_you\_ are,” said

Lord Robert, screwing up his eyeglass. “You”--shaking his head right

and left--“you are a man who takes delicately nurtured ladies out

of sheltered homes and sends them into holes and hovels in search

of abandoned women and their misbegotten children! Why”--turning to

Drake-“what do you think has happened? My wife has fallen under this

gentleman's influence--the poor simpleton!--and not one hour before I

left my house she brought home a child which he had given her to adopt.

Think of it!--out of the shambles of Soho, and God knows whose brat and

bastard!”

The words were hardly out of the man's mouth when John Storm had taken

him by both shoulders. “God \_does\_ know,” he said, “and so do I! Shall

I tell you whose child that is? Shall I? It's yours!” The man saw it

coming and turned white as a ghost. “Yours! and your wife has taken up

the burden of your sin and shame, for she's a good woman, and you are

not fit to live on the earth she walks upon!”

He left the two men speechless and went heavily down the stairs. Glory

was waiting for him at the door. Her eyes were glistening after recent

tears.

“You will come no more?” she said. She could read him like a book. “I

can see that you intend to come no more.”

He did not deny it, and after a moment she opened the door and he passed

out with a look of utter weariness. Then she went back to her room and

flung herself on the bed, face downward.

The men in the drawing-room were beginning to recover themselves. Lord

Robert was humming a tune, Drake pacing to and fro.

“Buying up his church to make a theatre for Glory was the very

refinement of cruelty!” said Drake. “Good heavens! what possessed me?”

“Original sin, dear boy!” said Lord Robert, with a curl of the lip.

“Original? A bad plagiarism, you mean!”

“Very well. If \_I\_ helped you to do it, shall I help you to give it

up? Withdraw the prospectus and return the deposits on shares--the dear

Archdeacon's among the rest.”

Drake took up his hat and left the house. Lord Robert followed him

presently. Then the drawing-room was empty, and the hollow sound of

sobbing came down to it from the bedroom above.

\* \* \* \* \*

Father Storm read prayers in church that night with a hard and absent

heart. A terrible impulse of hate had taken hold of him. He hated Drake,

he hated Glory, he hated himself most of all, and felt as if seven

devils had taken possession of him, and he was a hypocrite, and might

fall dead at the altar.

“But what a fate the Almighty has saved me from!” he thought. Glory

would have been a drag on his work for life. He must forget her. She

was only worthy of his contempt. Yet he could not help but remember how

beautiful she had looked in her mourning dress, with that pure pale face

and its signs of suffering! Or how charming she had seemed to him even

in the midst of all that deception! Or how she had held him as by a

spell!

Going home he came upon a group of men in the Court. One of them planted

himself full in front and said with an insolent swagger: “Me and my

mytes thinks there's too many parsons abart 'ere. What do you think,

sir?”

“I think there are more gamblers and thieves, my lad,” he answered, and

at the next instant the man had struck him in the face. He closed with

the ruffian, grappled him by the throat, and flung him on his back. One

moment he held him there, writhing and gasping, then he said, “Get up,

and get off, and let me see no more of you!”

“No, sir, not this time,” said a voice above his back. The crowd had

melted away and a policeman stood beside them. “I've been waiting for

this one for weeks, Father,” he said, and he marched the man to jail.

It was Charlie Wilkes. At the trial of Mrs. Jupe that morning, Aggie,

being a witness, had been required to mention his name. It was all in

the evening papers, and he had been dismissed from his time-keeping at

the foundry.

XIII.

A week passed. Breakfast was over at Victoria Square, and John Storm was

glancing at the pages of a weekly paper. “Listen!” he cried, and then

read aloud in a light tone of mock bravery which broke down at length

into a husky gurgle:

“'The sympathy which has lately been evoked by the announcement that a

proprietary church in Soho has been sold for secular uses, is creditable

to public sentiment----'”

“Think of that, now!” interrupted Mrs. Callender.

“'----and no doubt the whole community will agree to hope that Father

Storm will recover from the irritation natural to his eviction----'”

“Aye, we can all get over another body's disappointment, laddie.”

“'But there is a danger that in this instance the altruism of the time

may develop a sentimentality not entirely good for public morals----'”

“When the ox is down there are lots of butchers, ye ken!”

“'With the uses to which the fabric is to be converted, it is no part of

our purpose to deal, further than to warn the public not to lend an ear

to the all too prurient purity of the amateur moralist; but considering

the character of the work now carried on in Soho, no doubt with the best

intentions----'”

“Aye, aye, it's easy to steal the goose and give the giblets in alms.”

“'----it behooves us to consider if the community is not to be

congratulated on its speedy and effectual ending. Father Storm is a

young man of some talents and social position, but without any special

experience or knowledge of the world--in fact a weak, oversanguine, and

rather foolish fanatic----'”

“Oh, aye, he's down; down with him!”

“'----and therefore it is monstrous that he should be allowed to subvert

the order of social life or disturb the broad grounds of the reasonable

and the practical----'”

“Never mind. High winds only blaw on high hills, laddie!”

“'----As for the “fallen sister” whom he has taken under his special

care, we confess to a feeling that too much sympathy has been wasted

on her already. Her feet take hold of hell, her house is the way of the

grave, going down to the chamber of death----'”

Mrs. Callender leaped to her feet. “That's the 'deacon-man; I ken the

cloven hoof!”

John Storm had flung the paper away. “What a cowardly world it is!” he

said. “But God wins in the end, and by God he shall!”

“Tut, man! don't tak' on like that. You can't climb the Alps on

roller-skates, you see! But as for the Archdeacon, pooh! I'm no windy

aboot your 'Sisters' and 'Settlements' and sic like, but if there had

been society papers in the Lord's time, Simon the Pharisee would have

been a namby-pamby critic compared to some of them.”

A moment afterward she was looking out of the window and holding up both

hands. “My gracious! It's himsel'! It's the Prime Minister!”

A gaunt old gentleman with a meagre mustache, wearing a broad-brimmed

hat and unfashionable black clothes, was stepping up to the door.

“Yes, it's my uncle!” said John, and the old lady fled out of the room

to change her cap.

“I have heard what has happened, John, so I have come to see you,” said

the Prime Minister.

Was he thinking of the money? John felt uneasy and ashamed.

“I'm sorry, my boy, very sorry!”

“Thank you, uncle.”

“But it all comes, you see, of the ridiculous idea that we are a

Christian nation! Such a thing couldn't have occurred at the shrine of a

pagan god!”

“It was only a proprietary church, uncle. I was much to blame.”

“I do not deny that you have acted unwisely, but what difference

does that make, my boy? To sell a church seems like the climax of

irreverence; but they are doing as bad every day. If you want to see

what times the Church has fallen on, look at the advertisements in your

religious papers--your Benefice and Church Patronage Gazette, and so

forth. A traffic, John, a slave traffic, worse than anything in Africa,

where they sell bodies, not souls!”

“It is a crime which cries to the avenging anger of Heaven,” said John;

“but it is the Establishment that is to blame, not the Church, uncle.”

“We are a nation of money-lenders, my boy, and the Church is the worst

usurer of them all, with its learned divines in scarlet hoods, who hold

shares in music halls, and its Fathers in God living at ease and leasing

out public-houses. \_You\_ have been lending money on usury too, and on a

bad security. What are you going to do now?”

“Go on with my work, uncle, and do two hours where I did one before.”

“And get yourself kicked where you got yourself kicked before!”

“Why not? If God puts ten pounds on a man, he gives him strength to bear

twenty.”

“John, John, I am feeling rather sore, and I can't bear much more of it.

I'm growing old, and my life is rather lonely too. Except your father,

you are my only kinsman now, and it seems as if our old family must die

with you. But come, my boy, come, throw up all this sorry masquerade.

Isn't there a woman in the world who can help me to persuade you? I

don't care who she is, or what, or where she comes from.”

John had coloured to the eyes, and was stammering something about the

true priest cut off from earthly marriage, therefore free to commit

himself completely to his work, when Mrs. Callender came back, spruce

and smart, with many smiles and curtsies. The Prime Minister greeted her

with the same old-fashioned courtesy, and they cooed away like two old

doves, until a splendid equipage drove up to the door, and the plain old

gentleman drove away in it.

“Wasn't he nice with me? wasn't he, now?” the old lady kept saying, and

John being silent--“Tut! you young men are just puir loblollyboys with a

leddy when the auld ones come.”

Going to Soho that day John Storm felt a sudden thrill at seeing on the

street in front of him, walking in the same direction, an elderly figure

in cassock and cord. It was the Father Superior of the Brotherhood. John

overtook him and greeted him.

“Ah, I was on my way to see you, my son.”

“Then you have heard what has happened?”

“Yes, Satan's shafts fly fast.” Then taking John's arm as they walked,

“Earthly blows are but reminders of Him, my son, like the hair shirt

of the monk, and this trouble of yours is God's reminder of your broken

obedience. What did I tell you when you left us--that you would come

back within a year? And you will! Leave the world, my son. It treats

you badly. The human spirit reigns over it, and even the Church is a

Christian society out of the sphere and guidance of the Divine Spirit.

Leave it and return to your unfinished vows.”

John shook his head and took the Father into the clergy-house, where

the girls were gathering for the evening. “How can I leave the world,

Father, when there's work like this to do? Society presents to a large

proportion of these bright creatures the alternative, 'Sell yourself

or starve.' But God says, 'Live, work, and love.' Therefore society is

doomed, and that dead man's sepulchre, the Establishment, is doomed, but

the Church will live, and become the corner-stone of the new order, and

stand between woman and the world, as it stood of old between the poor

and the rich.”

The Father preached for John that night, taking for his text “The flesh

lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” And on

parting from him at the door of the sacristy he said: “Religious work

can only be good, my son, if it concerns itself first of all with the

salvation of souls. Now what if it pleased God to remove you from all

this--to call you to a work of intercession--say, to the mission field?”

John's face turned pale. “There can be no need to fly,” he said, with a

frightened look. “Surely London is a mission field wide enough for any

man.”

“Yet who knows? Perhaps for your own soul's sake, lest vanity should

take hold of you, or the love of fame, or--or any of the snares of

Satan! But good-bye, and God be with you!”

When John Storm reached home he found a letter awaiting him. It was from

Glory:

“Are you dead and buried? If so, send me word, that I may compose your

epitaph. 'Here lies--\_Lies\_ is good, for though you didn't promise to

come back you ought to have done so; therefore it comes to the same

thing in the end. You must not think too ill of Mr. Drake. I call

him the milk of human kindness, and his friend Lord Robert the oil

thereof--I mean the oil of vitriol. But his temper is like the Caspian

Sea, having neither ebb nor flow, while yours is like the Bay of

Biscay--oh, so I can't expect you to agree. As for poor me, I may be

guilty of all the seven deadly sins, but I can't see why I should be

boycotted on that account. There is something I didn't know when you

were here, and I want to explain about it. Therefore come 'right away'

(Lord Bob, Americanized). Being slow to anger and plenteous in mercy,

I will forgive you if you come soon. If you don't, I'll--I'll go on the

bike--feminine equivalent to the drink. To tell you the truth, I've done

so already, having been careering round the gardens of the Inn during

the early hours of morning, clad in Rosa's 'bloomers,' in which I make a

picture and a sensation at the same time, she being several sizes larger

round the hips, and fearfully and wonderfully made. If that doesn't

fetch you I'll go in for boxing next, and in a pair of four-ounce gloves

I'll cut a \_striking\_ figure, I can tell you.

“But, John Storm, have you cast me off entirely? Do you intend to

abandon me? Do you think there is no salvation left for me? And are you

going to let me sink in all this mire without stretching out a hand to

help me? Oh, dear! oh, dear! I don't know what has come over the silly

old world since I came back to London. Think it must be teething,

judging by the sharpness of its bite, and feel as if I should like to

give it a dose of syrup of squills.”

As John read the letter his eyelids quivered and his mouth relaxed. Then

he glanced at it again, and his face clouded.

“I can not leave her entirely to the mercy of men like these,” he

thought.

This innocent daring, this babelike ripping up of serviceable

conventions--God knows what advantage such men might take of it. He must

see her once again, to warn, to counsel her. It was his duty--he must

not shrink from it.

\* \* \* \* \*

It had been a day of painful impressions to Glory. Early in the morning

Lord Robert had called to take her to the “reading” of the new play. It

took place in the saloon of an unoccupied Strand theatre, of which the

stage also had been engaged for rehearsal. The company were gathered

there, and, being more or less experienced actors and actresses, they

received her with looks of courteous indulgence, as one whose leading

place must be due to other things than talent. This stung her; she felt

her position to be a false one, and was vexed that she had permitted

Lord Robert to call for her. But her humiliation had yet hardly begun.

While they stood waiting for the manager, who was late, a gorgeous

person with a waxed mustache and in a fur-lined coat, redolent of the

mixed odour of perfume and stale tobacco, forced his way up to her and

offered his card. She knew the man in a moment.

“I'm Josephs,” he said in a confidential undertone, “and if there's

anything I can do for you--acting management--anything--it vill give me

pleesure.”

Glory flushed up and said, “But you don't seem to remember, sir, that we

have met before.”

The man smiled blandly. “Oh, yes. I've kept track of you ever since and

know all about you. You hadn't made your appearance then, and naturally

I couldn't do much. But now--\_now\_ if you vill give me de pleesure----”

“Then an agent is one who can do nothing for you when you want help, but

when you don't want it----”

The man laughed to carry off his audacity. “Veil, you know vhat they say

of us--agent from \_agere\_, 'to do,' and we're always 'doing.' Ha, ha! But

if you are villing to let bygones be bygones, I am, and velcome.”

Glory's face was crimson. “Will somebody go for the stage doorkeeper?”

she said, and one of the company went out on that errand. Then, raising

her voice so that everybody listened, she said: “Mr. Josephs, when I was

quite unknown, and trying to get on, and finding it very hard, as we all

do, you played me the cruellest trick a man ever played on a woman. I

don't owe you any grudge, but, for the sake of every poor girl who is

struggling to live in London, I am going to turn you out of the house.”

“Eh? Vhat?”

The stage doorkeeper had entered. “Porter, do you see this gentleman? He

is never to come into this theatre again as long as we are here, and if

he tries to force his way in you are to call a policeman and have him

bundled back into the street!”

“Daddle doo,” and the waxed mustache over the grinning mouth seemed to

cut the face across.

When Josephs had gone Glory could see that the looks of indulgence on

the faces of the company had gone also. “She'll do!” said one. “She's

got the stuff in her!” said another, but Glory herself was now quaking

with fear, and her troubles were not yet ended.

A little stout gentleman entered hurriedly with a roll of papers in

his hand. He stepped up to Lord Robert, apologized for being late, and

mopped his bald crown and red face. It was Sefton.

“This is to be our manager,” said Lord Robert, and Mr. Sefton bobbed his

head, winked with both eyes, and said, “Charmed, I'm sure--charmed!”

Glory could have sunk into the earth for shame, but in a moment she had

realized the crushing truth that when a woman has been insulted in the

deepest place--in her honour--the best she can do is to say nothing

about it.

The company seated themselves around the saloon, and the reading began.

First came the list of characters, with the names of the cast. Glory's

name and character came last, and her nerves throbbed with sudden pain

when the manager read, “and \_Gloria\_--Miss Glory Quayle.”

There was a confused murmur, and then the company composed themselves to

listen. It was Gloria's play. She was rather scandalous. After the first

act Glory thought it was going to be the story of Nell Gwynne in modern

life; after the second, of Lady Hamilton; and after the third, in which

the woman wrecks and ruins the first man in the country, she knew it was

only another version of the Harlot's Progress, and must end as that had

ended.

The actors were watching their own parts, and pointing and punctuating

with significant looks the places where the chances came, but Glory was

overwhelmed with confusion. How was she to play this evil woman? The

poison went to the bone, and to get into the skin of such a creature

a good woman would have to dispossess herself of her very soul. The

reading ended, every member of the company congratulated some other

member on the other's opportunities, and Sefton came up to Glory to ask

if she did not find the play strong and the part magnificent.

“Yes,” she said; “but only a bad woman could play that part properly.”

“\_You'll\_ do it, my dear, you'll do it on your own!” he answered gaily,

and she went home perplexed, depressed, beaten down, and ashamed.

A newspaper had been left at the door. It was a second-rate theatrical

journal, still damp from the press. The handwriting on the wrapper was

that of Josephs, and there was a paragraph marked in blue pencil. It

pretended to be a record of her short career, and everything was in

it--the programme selling, the dressing, the foreign clubs--all the

refuse of her former existence, set in a sinister light and leaving the

impression of an abject up-bringing, as of one who had been \_in\_ the

streets if not on them.

Well, she had chosen her life and must take it at its own price. But,

oh, the cruelty of the world to a woman, when her very success could be

her shame! She felt that the past had gripped her again--the pitiless

past--she could never drag herself out of the mire.

That night she wrote to John Storm, and next morning before Rosa had

risen--her duties kept her up late--she heard a voice downstairs. Her

dog also heard it and began to bark. At the next moment John was in the

room and she was laughing up into his splendid black eyes, for he had

caught her down at the sofa holding the pug's nose and trying to listen.

“Is it you? It's so good of you to come early! But this, dog”--breaking

into the Manx dialect--“she's ter'ble, just ter'ble!” Then rising and

looking serious: “I wished to tell you that I knew nothing about the

church, nothing whatever. If I'd had the least idea... but they told me

nothing--it was very wrong--nothing. And the first thing I knew was when

I saw it in all the newspapers.”

He was leaning on the end of the mantelpiece. “If they deceived you like

that, how can you go on with them?”

“You mean” (she was leaning on the other end, and speaking falteringly),

“you mean that I ought to give it all up. But it's too late for that

now. It was too late when I came to know. Besides, it would do no good;

you would be in the same position still, and as for me--well, somebody

else would have the theatre, so where's the use?”

“I was thinking of the future, Glory, not the past. People who deceive

us once are capable of doing so again.”

“True--that's true--only--only----”

She was breaking down, and he turned his eyes away from her, saying,

“Well, it's all over now, and there's no help for it.”

“No, there's no help for it.”

He tried to think what he had come to say, but do what he would he could

not remember. The moment he looked at her the thread of his thoughts was

lost, and the fragrance of her presence, so sweet, so close, made him

feel as if he wanted to touch her. There was an awkward silence, and

then he fidgeted with his hat and moved.

“Are you going so soon?”

“I'm busy, and----”

“Yes, you must be busy now.”

“And then why--why should we prolong a painful interview, Glory?”

She shot up a look under her eyebrows. His eyes had a harassed

expression, but there was a gleam in them that set her heart beating.

“Is it so painful? Is it?”

“Glory, I meant to tell you I could not come again.”

“No! You're not so busy as all that, are you? Surely” (the Manx again,

only she seemed to be breathless now)--“surely you're not so ter'ble

busy but you can just put a sight on a girl now and again for all?”

He made a gesture with his hand. “It disturbs, it distracts----”

“Oh, is that all? Then,” with a forced laugh, “I'll come to see you

instead. Yes, I will, though.”

“No, you mustn't do that, Glory. It would only torment----”

“Torment! Gough bless me! Why torment?” and a fugitive flame shot up at

him.

“Because”--he stammered, and she could see that his lips quivered; then

calmly, very calmly, pronouncing the words slowly, and in a voice as

cold as ice--“because I love you!”

“You!”

“Didn't you know that?” His voice was guttural. “Haven't you known it

all along? What's the use of pretending? You've dragged it out of me.

Was that only to show your power over me?”

“Oh!”

She had heard what her heart wanted to hear, and not for worlds would

she have missed hearing it, yet she was afraid, and trembling all over.

“We two are of different natures, Glory, that's the trouble between

us--now, and always has been. We have nothing in common, absolutely

nothing. You have chosen your path in life, and it is not my path. I

have chosen mine, and it is not yours. Your friends are not my friends.

We are two different beings altogether, and yet--and yet I love you! And

that's why I can not come again.”

It was sweet, but it was terrible. So different from what she had

dreamed of: “I love you!--you are my soul!--I can not live without you!”

Yet he was right. She had slain his love before it was born to her--it

was born dead. In an unsteady voice, which had suddenly become husky,

she said:

“No doubt you are right. I must leave you to judge. Perhaps you have

thought it all out.”

“Don't suppose it will be easy for me, Glory. I've suffered a good deal,

and I dare say I shall suffer more yet. If so, I'll bear it. But for the

sake of my work----”

“Ah!--But of course I can't expect--Naturally you love your work

also----”

“I \_do\_ love my work also, and therefore it's no use trifling. 'If thine

eye offend--'”

She was stung. “Well, since there's no help for it, I suppose we must

shake hands and part.”

Not until then--not until he had pronounced his doom and she had

accepted it did he realize how beautiful she seemed to him. He felt as

if something in his throat wanted to cry out.

“It isn't what I expected, Glory--what I dreamed of for years.”

“But it's best--it seems best.”

“I tried to make a place for you, too, but you wouldn't have it--you let

it go; you preferred this other lot in life.”

She remembered Josephs, and Sefton, and the newspaper, and the part, and

she covered her face with her hands.

“How can I go on, Glory, to the peril of my--It's dangerous, even

dangerous.”

“Yes, you are a clergyman and I am an actress. You must think of that.

People are so ignorant, so cruel, and I dare say they are talking

already.”

“Do you think I should care for that, Glory?” Her hands came down from

her face. “Do you think I should care one jot if all the miserable

scandal-mongering world thought----”

“You'll think the best of me, then?”

“I'll think of both of us as we used to be, my child, before the world

came between us, before you----”

She was fighting against an impulse to fling herself into his arms, but

she only said in a soft voice: “You are quite right, quite justified. I

have chosen my lot in life, and must make the best of it.”

“Well----” He was holding out his hand.

But nevertheless she put her hand behind her, thinking: “No; if I shake

hands with him it will be the end of everything.”

“Good-bye!” and with an expression of utter despair he left her.

She did not cry, and when Rosa came down immediately afterward she was

smiling and her eyes were very bright.

“Was that your friend Mr. Storm? Yes? You must beware of him, my dear.

He would stop your career and think he was doing God's service.”

“There's no danger of that, Rosa. He only came to say he would come no

more,” and then something flashed in her eyes and died away, and then

flashed again.

“Yes,” thought Rosa, “there's an extraordinary attraction about her

that makes all other women seem tame.” And then Rosa remembered somebody

else, and sighed.

\* \* \* \* \*

John Storm went back to Soho by way of Clare Market, and when people

saluted him in the streets with “Good-morning, Father,” he did not

answer because he did not see them. On going to church that night he

came upon a group of Charlie's cronies betting six to one against his

getting off, and a girl in gay clothes was waiting to speak to him. It

was Aggie. She had come to plead for Charlie.

“It's the drink, sir. 'E's a good boy when 'e's not drinking. But I ask

pardon for 'im; and if you would only not prosecute----”

John was ashamed of himself at sight of the girl's fidelity to her

unworthy lover.

“And you, my child--what about you?”

“Oh, I'm all right. What's broken can't be mended.”

And meanwhile the church bells were ringing and the cabs were running to

the theatres.

XIV.

The rehearsals began early in the morning and usually lasted until late

in the afternoon. Glory found them wearisome, depressing, and often

humiliating. The body of the theatre was below the level of the street,

and in the daytime was little better than a vast vault. If she entered

by the front she stumbled against seats and saw the figures of men

and women silhouetted in the distance, and heard the echo of cavernous

voices. If by the back, she came upon the prompter's table set midway

across the stage, with a twin gas-bracket shooting up behind it like a

geyser, and an open space of some twenty feet by twenty in front whereon

the imaginary passions were to disport themselves at play.

Glory found real ones among them, and they were sometimes in hideous

earnest. Jealousy, envy, uncharitableness, and all the rancour of life

where the struggle for it is bitterest, attempts to take advantage of

her inexperience, to rob her of the best positions on the stage, to

cut out her lines which “scored”--these, with the weary waits, the half

darkness, the chill atmosphere, the void in front, with its seats in

linen covers, suggesting an audience of silent ghosts, and then the

sense of the bright, busy, bustling, rattling, real world above, sent

her home day after day with a headache, a heartache, and tears bubbling

out of her eyes.

And when she had conquered these conditions, or settled down to them,

and had made such progress with her part as to throw away her scrip, the

old horror of the woman she was to make herself into, came back as a new

terror. The visionary Gloria was very proud and vain and selfish, and

trampled everything under foot that she might possess the world and the

things of the world.

Meantime the real Gloria had a far different part to play. Every

morning, with a terrible reality at her heart, she glanced over the

newspapers for news of John Storm. She had not far to look. A sort of

grotesque romance had gathered about him, as of a modern Don Quixote

tilting at windmills. His name was the point of a pun; there were

cartoons, caricatures, and all other forms of the joke that is not a

joke because it is an insult.

Sometimes she took stolen glances at his work. On Sunday morning she

walked through Soho, past the people sitting on their doorsteps reading

the sporting intelligence in the Sunday papers, with their larks in

cages hung on nails, overhead, until she came to the church, and heard

the singing inside, and saw chalked up on the walls the legend, “God

bless the Farver!”

“Strange charge against a clergyman!” It was a low-class paper, and the

charge was a badge of honour. A young ruffian (it was Charles Wilkes)

had been brought up on remand on a charge of assaulting Father Storm,

and being sentenced to a week's imprisonment, notwithstanding the

Father's appeal and offer of bail, he had accused the clergyman of

relations with his sweetheart (it was Agatha Jones).

Glory's anger at the world's treatment of John Storm deepened to a great

love of the misunderstood and downtrodden man. She saw an announcement

of his last service, and determined to go to it. The church was crowded,

chiefly by the poor, and the air was heavy with the smell of oranges and

beer. It was a week-day evening, and when the choir came in, followed

by John Storm in his black cassock, Glory could not help a thrill of

physical joy at being near him.

The text was, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye

are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outside,

but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness!” The first

half of the, sermon was a denunciation of the morality of men. We made

clean the outside of the platter, but the so-called purity of England

was a smug sham built upon rottenness and sin! There were men among

us, damned sensualists, left untouched by the idleness of the public

conscience, who did not even know where their children were to be found.

Let them go down into the gutters of life and look for their own faces,

and--God forgive them!--their mothers' faces, among the outcast and the

criminal. The second half was a defence of woman. The sins of the world

against women were the most crying wrongs of the time. Had they ever

reflected on the heroism of women, on their self-denying, unrewarded

labour? Oh, why was woman held so cheap as in this immoral London of

to-day? There had been scarcely a breach of the law of Nature by women,

and not one that men were not chiefly to blame for. Men tempted them by

love of dress, of ease, of money, and of fame, to forget their proper

vocation; but every true woman came right in the end, and preferred to

the false and fictitious labour for worldly glory, a mother's silent

and unseen devotion, counting it no virtue at all. “Yes, women, mothers,

girls, in your hands lies the salvation of England. May you live in this

prospect, and may God and his ever-blessed Mother be your reward all

through this weary life and in glory everlasting!”

There was a procession with banners, cross, stars, green and blue

fleur-de-lis, but Glory saw none of it. She was kneeling with her head

down and heart choked with emotion. The next she knew the service was

over, the congregation was gone; only one old woman in widow's weeds was

left, jingling a bunch of keys.

“Has the Father gone?”

“No, ma'am; he is still in the sacristy.”

“Show me to it.”

At the next moment, with fluttering throat and a look of mingled love

and awe, she was standing eye to eye with John Storm in the little bare

chamber off the church.

“Glory, why do you come here?”

“I can't help it.”

“But we said good-bye and parted.”

“You did. I didn't. It was not so easy----”

“Easy? I told you it wouldn't be easy, my child, and it hasn't been. I

said I should suffer, and I have suffered. But I've borne it--you see

I've borne it. Don't ask me at what cost.”

“Oh, oh, oh!” and she covered her face.

“Yes, the devil tortured me with love first. I was seeing you and

hearing you everywhere and in everything, Glory. But I got over that,

and then he tortured me with remorse. I had left you to the mercy of the

world. It was my duty to watch over you. I did it, too.”

She glanced up quickly.

“Ah, you never knew that, but no matter! It's all over now, and I'm a

different man entirely. But why do you come and torment me again? It's

nothing to you, nothing at all. You can shake it off in a moment. That's

your nature, Glory; you can't help it. But have you no pity? You find me

here, trying to help the helpless--the brave girls who have the

virtue to be poor, and the strength to be weak, and the courage to be

friendless. Why can't you leave me alone? What am I to you? Nothing at

all! You care nothing for me--nothing whatever.”

She glanced up again, and the look of love in her eyes was stronger now

than the look of awe. He saw it and could not help knowing how strongly

it worked upon his feelings.

“Go back to your own world, unhappy girl! You love it--you must; you

have sacrificed the best impulses of your heart to it!”

She was smiling now. It was the old radiant smile, but with a gleam of

triumph in it that he had never seen before. It worked like madness upon

him, and he tried to insult her again.

“Go back to your own company, to the people who \_play\_ at real life,

and build toy houses, and give themselves away body and soul for the

clapping of hands in a theatre! Go back to the lies and hypocrisies of

society, and the brainless, mashers who adorn it! They dance superbly,

and are at home in drawing-rooms, and know all about sporting matters

and theatrical affairs! I know none of these things, and I am kicked and

cuffed and ridiculed and hounded down as an indecent man or shunned as a

moral leper I Why do you come to me?” he cried, hoarse and husky.

But she only stretched out her hands to him and said, “Because I love

you!”

“What are you saying?” He was quivering with pain.

“I love you, and have always loved you, and you love me--you know you

do--you love me still!”

“Glory!”

“John!”

“For God's sake! Glory!”

With a wild shout of joy he rushed upon her, flung his arms about her,

and covered her face and hands with kisses. After a moment he whispered,

“Not here, not here!” and she felt too that the room was suffocating

them, and they must go out into the open air, the fields, the park.

Somebody was knocking at the door. It was Mrs. Pincher. A man was

waiting to speak to the Father. They found him in the lane. It was Jupe,

the waiter. His simple face wore a strange expression of joy and fear,

as if he wished to smile and dare not.

“My pore missis 'as got off and wants to come 'ome, sir, and I thought

as you'd tell me what I oughter do.”

“Take her back and forgive her, my man, that's the Christian course.”

His love was now boundless; his large charity embraced everything,

and going off he saluted everybody. “Good-evening, Mrs.

Pincher.--Good-night, Lydia.”

“Well, 'e \_is\_ a Father, too, and no mistake!” somebody was saying

behind him as he went away with Glory.

The moon was at the full, and while they were passing through the

streets it struggled with the gas from the shop windows as the flame of

a fire struggles with the sunshine, but when they passed under the trees

it shone out in its white splendour like a bride. The immeasurable vault

above was silvered with stars, too, through depth on depth of space, and

all the glorious earth and heaven seemed to smile the smile of love. A

strong south breeze was blowing, and as it shook the trees of the park,

that blessed patch of Nature in the midst-of the toiling city seemed to

sing the song of love!

Their hands found each other and they walked along almost in silence,

afraid to break the spell of their dream lest they should awake and

find it gone. It seemed wonderful to him that they were together, and he

could hardly believe it was reality, though the touch of her hand filled

him with a strange physical exultation which he had never felt before.

He seemed to be walking on the clouds, and she too was swaying by his

side as if her blood was dancing. Sometimes she dried her glistening

eyes, and once she stopped and swung in front of him and looked long at

him and then raised her face to his and kissed him.

“Whether you like it or not your life is bound up with mine for ever and

ever!” she whispered.

“It had to be,” he answered. “I know it now. I can no longer deceive

myself.”

“And we shall be happy? In spite of all you said we shall be very happy,

eh?”

“Yes, that will be quite forgotten, Glory.”

“And forgiven,” she said, and then between a sigh and a blush she asked

him to kiss her again.

“My love!”

“My soul!”

The wind swept the hood of her cape about her head and he could smell

the fragrance of her hair.

He tried to think what he had done to deserve such happiness, but all

the suffering he had gone through seemed as nothing compared to a joy

like this. The great clock of Westminster swung its hollow sounds into

the air, which went riding by on the wind like the notes of an organ,

now full and now as soft as a baby's whisper. They could hear the

far-off rumble of the vast city which fringed their blessed island like

a mighty sea, and through the pulse of their clasped hands it seemed as

if they felt the pulse of the world. An angel had come down and breathed

on the face of the waters, and it was God's world, after all.

He took her home, and they parted at the door. “Don't come in to-night,”

she whispered. She wished to be alone, that she might think it all out

and go over it again, every word, every look. There was a lingering

hand-clasp and then she was gone.

He returned through the park and tried to step over the very places

where her feet had trod. On reaching Buckingham Gate he turned back

and walked round the park, and again round it, and yet again. The bells

tolled out the hours, the cabs went westward with ladies in evening

wraps going home from theatres, the tide of traffic ebbed farther and

farther and died down, but still he walked and the wind sang to him.

“God can not blame us,” he thought. “We were made to love each other.”

He uncovered his head to let the wind comb through his hair, and he was

happy, happy, happy! Sometimes he shut his eyes, and then it was hard to

believe that she was not walking by his side, a fragrant presence in the

moonlight, going step by step with him.

When the day was near the wind had gone, the little world of wood was

silent, and his footsteps crunched on the gravel. Then a yellow gleam

came in the sky to the east, and a chill gust swept up as a scout before

the dawn, the trees began to shiver, the surface of the lake to creep,

the birds to call, and the world to stretch itself and yawn.

Peace in her chamber, wheresoe'er

It be--a holy place.

As he went home by Birdcage Walk the park was still heavy with sleep,

and its homeless wanderers had not yet risen from their couches on the

seats. A pale mist was lying over London, but the towers of the Abbey

stood clear above it, and pigeons were wheeling around them like

sea-fowl about rocks in the sea. What a night it had been! A night of

dreams, of love, of rapture!

The streets were empty and very quiet--only the slow rattle of the

dust-cart and the measured step of policemen changing beats. Long blue

vistas and a cemetery silence as of a world under the great hand of the

gentle brother of Death, and then the clang of Big Ben striking six.

A letter was waiting for John in the breathless hall. It was from the

Bishop of London: “Come and see me at St. James's Square.”

XV.

Suddenly there sprang out to Glory the charm and fascination of the life

she was putting away. Trying to be true to her altered relations with

John Storm, she did not go to rehearsal the next morning--, but not yet

having the courage of her new position, she did not tell Rosa her true

reason for staying away. The part was exhausting--it tried her very

much; a little break would do no harm. Rosa wrote to apologize for her

on the score of health, and thus the first cloud of dissimulation rose

up between them.

Two days passed, and then a letter came from the manager: “Trust you

are rested and will soon be back. The prompter read your lines, but

everything has gone to pieces. Slack, slovenly, spiritless, stupid,

nobody acting, and nobody awake, it seems to me. 'All right at night,

governor,' and the usual nonsense. Shows how much we want you. But

envious people are whispering that you are afraid of the part. The

blockheads! If you succeed this time you'll be made for life, my dear.

And you \_will\_ succeed! Yours merrily,” etc.

With this were three letters addressed to the theatre. One of them was

from a press-cutting agency asking to be allowed to supply all newspaper

articles relating to herself, and inclosing a paragraph as a specimen:

“A little bird whispers that 'Gloria,' as 'Gloria,' is to be a startling

surprise. Those who have seen her rehearse----But mum's the word--an' we

could an' we would,” etc. Another of the letters was from the art editor

of an illustrated weekly asking for a sitting to their photographer for

a full-page picture; and the third inclosed the card of an interviewer

on an evening paper. Only three days ago Glory would have counted all

this as nothing, yet now she could not help but feel a thrilling, joyous

excitement.

Drake called after the absence of a fortnight. He had come to speak of

his last visit. His face was pale and serious, not fresh and radiant

as usual, his voice was shaking and his manner nervous. Glory had

never seen him exhibit so much emotion, and Rosa looked on in dumb

astonishment.

“I was to blame,” he said, “and I have come to say so. It was a cowardly

thing to turn the man out of his church, and it was worse than cowardly

to use you in doing it. Everything is fair, they say, in----” But he

flushed up like a girl and stopped, and then faltered: “Anyhow, I'm

sorry--very sorry; and if there is anything I can do----”

Glory tried to answer him, but her heart was beating violently, and she

could not speak.

“In fact, I've tried to make amends already. Lord Robert has a living

vacant in Westminster, and I've asked him to hand it over to the Bishop,

with the request that Father Storm----”

“But will he?”

“I've told him he must. It's the least we can do if we are to have any

respect for ourselves. And anyhow, I'm about tired of this anti-Storm

uproar. It may be all very well far men like me to object to the

man--I deny his authorities, and think him a man out of his century and

country--but for these people with initials, who write in the religious

papers, to rail at him, these shepherds who live on five thousand a year

and pretend to follow One who hadn't a home or a second coat, and whose

friends were harlots and sinners, though he was no sinner himself--it's

infamous, it's atrocious, it raises my gorge against their dead creeds

and paralytic churches. Whatever his faults, he is built on a large

plan, he has the Christ idea, and he is a man and a gentleman, and I'm

ashamed that I took advantage of him. That's all over now, and

there's no help for it; but if I might hope that you will forgive--and

forget----”

“Yes,” said Glory in a low voice, and then there was silence, and when

she lifted her head Drake was gone and Rosa was wiping her eyes.

“It was all for love of you, Glory. A woman can't hate a man when he

does wrong for love of herself.”

John Storm came in later the same day, when Rosa had gone out and Glory

was alone. He was a different man entirely. His face looked round and

his dark eyes sparkled. The clouds of his soul seemed to have drifted

away, and he was boiling over with enthusiasm. He laughed constantly,

and there was something almost depressing in the lumbering attempts at

humour of the serious man.

“What do you think has happened? The Bishop sent for me and offered me

a living in Westminster. It turns out to being the gift of Lord Robert

Ure; but no thanks to him for it. Lady Robert was at the bottom of

everything. She had called on the Bishop. He remembered me at the

Brotherhood, and told me all about it. St. Jude's, Brown's Square, on

the edge of the worst quarter in Christendom! It seems the Archdeacon

expected it for Golightly, his son-in-law. The Reverend Joshua called

on me this morning and tried to bully me, but I soon bundled him off to

Botany Bay. Said the living had been promised to him--a lie, of course.

I soon found that out. A lie is well named, you know--it hasn't a

leg--to stand upon. Ha, ha, ha!”

Nothing would serve but that they should go to look at the scene of

their future life, and with Don--he had brought his dog; it had to be

held back from the pug under the table--they set off immediately. It was

Saturday night, and as they dipped down into the slums that lie under

the shadow of the Abbey, Old Pye Street, Peter's Street, and Duck Lane

were aflare with the coarse lights of open naphtha lamps, and all but

impassable with costers' barrows. There were the husky voices of the

street hawkers, the hoarse laughter, the quarrelling, the oaths, the

rasping shouts of the butcher selling chunks of dark joints by auction,

the screeches of the roast-potato man, and the smell of stale vegetables

and fried fish. “Jow, 'ow much a pound for yer turmaters?” “Three pence;

I gave mor'n that for 'em myself.” “Garn!” “S'elp me, Gawd, I did, mum!”

“Isn't it a glorious scene?” said John; and Glory, who felt chilled

and sickened, recalled herself from some dream of different things

altogether and said, “Isn't it?”

“Sanctuary, too! What human cats we are! The poor sinners cling to the

place still!”

He took her into the alleys and courts that score and wrinkle the map

of Westminster like an old man's face, and showed her the “model”

lodging-houses and the gaudily decorated hells where young girls and

soldiers danced and drank.

“What's the use of saying to these people, 'Don't drink; don't steal'?

They'll answer, 'If you lived in these slums you would drink too.' But

we'll show them that we can live here and do neither--that will be the

true preaching.”

And then he pictured a life of absolute self-sacrifice, which she was to

share with him. “You'll manage all money matters, Glory. You can't

think how I'm swindled. And then I'm such a donkey as far as money

goes--that's not far with me, you know. Ha, ha, ha! Who's to find it?

Ah, God pays his own debts. He'll see to that.”

They were to live under the church itself; to give bread to the hungry

and clothes to the naked; to set up their Settlement in the gaming-house

of the Sharkeys, now deserted and shut up; to take in the \_un\_deserving

poor-the people who had nothing to say for themselves, precisely those;

and thus they were to show that they belonged neither to the publicans

and sinners nor to the Scribes and Pharisees.

“Only let us get rid of self. Only let us show that self-interest never

enters our head in one single thing we do----” and meantime Glory, who

had turned her head aside with a lump in her throat, heard some one

behind them saying:

“Lawd, Jow, that's the curick and his dorg--'im as got pore Sharkey

took! See--'im with the laidy?”

“S'elp me, so it is! Another good man gorn to 'is gruel, and all 'long

of a bloomin' dorg.”

They walked round by the church. John was talking--rapturously at every

step, and Glory was dragging after him like a criminal going to the

pillory. At last they came out by Great Smith Street, and he cried:

“See, there's the house of God under its spider's web of scaffolding,

and here's the Broad Sanctuary--broad enough in all conscience! Look!”

A crowd of girls and men were trooping out of a place of entertainment

opposite, and there were screams and curses. “Look at 'im!” cried a

woman's voice. “There 'e is, the swine! And 'e was the ruin of me; and

now 'e's 'listed for a soldier and going off with another woman!”

“You're bleedin' drunk, that's what you are!” said a man's voice, “and

if you down't take kear I'll send ye 'ome on a dawer!”

“Strike me, will ye, ye dog? Do it! I dare you!”

“She ain't worth it, soldier--come along,” said another female voice,

whereupon the first broke into a hurricane of oaths; and a little

clergyman going by at the moment--it was the Rev. J. Golightly--said:

“Dear, dear! Are there no policemen about?” and so passed on, with his

tall wife tucked under his arm.

John Storm pressed through the crowd and came between the two who were

quarrelling. By the light of the lamp he could see them. The man was

Charlie Wilkes, in the uniform of a soldier; the woman, with the paint

running on her face, her fringe disordered, and her back hair torn down,

was Aggie Jones.

“We down't want no religion 'ere,” said Charlie, sneering.

“You'll get some, though, if you're not off quick!” said John. The man

looked round for the dog and a moment afterward he had disappeared.

Glory came up behind. “O Aggie, woman, is it you?” she said, and then

the girl began to cry in a drunken sob.

“Girls is cruel put upon, mum,” said one of the women; and another

cried, “Nix, the slops!” and a policeman came pushing his way and

saying: “Now, then, move on! We ain't going to stand 'ere all night.”

“Call a cab, officer,” said John.

“Yes sir--certainly, Father. Four-wheel-er!”

“Where do you live, Aggie?” said Glory; but the girl, now sobbing drunk,

was too far gone to follow her.

“She lives in Brown's Square, sir,” said the woman who had spoken

before, and when the cab came up she was asked to get in with the other

three.

It was a tenement house, fronting to one facade of St. Jude's, and

Aggie's room was on the second story. She was helpless, and John carried

her up the stairs. The place was in hideous disorder, with clothing

lying about on chairs, underclothing scattered on the floor, the fire

out, many cigarette ends in the fender, a candle stuck in a beer bottle,

and a bunch of withered roses on the table.

As John laid the girl on the bed she muttered, “Lemme alone!” and when

he asked what was to happen to her when she grew old if she behaved like

this when young, she mumbled: “Don't want to be old. Who's goin' to like

me then, d'ye think?”

Half an hour afterward Glory and John were passing through the gates

into Clement's Inn, with its moonlight and silence, its odour of

moistened grass, its glimpse of the stars, and the red and white blinds

of its windows lit up round about. John was still talking rapturously.

He was now picturing the part which Glory was to play in the life

they were to live together. She was to help and protect their younger

sisters, the child-women, the girls in peril, to enlist their loyalty

and filial tenderness for the hour of temptation.

“Won't it be glorious? To live the life, the real life of warfare with

the world's wickedness and woe! Won't it be magnificent? You'll do it

too! You'll go down into those slums and sloughs which I've shown you

to-night--they are the cradle of shame and sin, Glory, and this wicked

London rocks it!--you'll go down into them like a ministering angel to

raise the fallen and heal the wounded! You'll live in them, revel in

them, rejoice in them, they'll be your battlefield. Isn't that better,

far better, a thousand times better, than \_playing\_ at life, and all its

fashions and follies and frivolities?”

Glory struggled to acquiesce, and from time to time in a trembling

voice she said “Yes,” and “Oh, yes,” until they came to the door of the

Garden House, and then a strange thing happened. Somebody was singing in

the drawing-room to the music of the piano. It was Drake. The window was

open and his voice floated over the moonlit gardens;

Du liebes Kind, komm' geh mit mir!

Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir.

Suddenly it seemed to Glory that two women sprang into life in her--one

who loved John Storm and wished to live and work beside him, the other

who loved the world and felt that she could never give it up. And these

two women were fighting for her heart, which should have it and hold it

and possess it forever.

She looked up at John, and he was smiling triumphantly, “Are you happy?”

she asked.

“Happy! I know a hundred men who are a hundred times as rich as I, but

not one who is a hundredth part as happy!”

“Darling!” she whispered, holding back her tears. Then looking away from

him she said, “And do you really think I'm good enough for a life of

such devotion and self-sacrifice?”

“Good enough!” he cried, and for a moment his merry laughter drowned the

singing overhead.

“But will the world think so?”

“Assuredly. But who cares what the world thinks?”

“We do, dear--we must!”

And then, while the song went on, she began to depreciate herself in a

low voice and with a creeping sense of hypocrisy--to talk of her former

life in London as a danger, of the tobacco-shop, the foreign clubs,

the music hall, and all the mire and slime with which she had been

besmirched. “Everything is known now, dear. Have you never thought of

this? It is your duty to think of it.”

But he only laughed again with a joyous voice. “What's the odds?” he

said. “The world is made up for the most part of low, selfish, sensual

beings, incapable of belief in noble aims. Every innovator in such a

world exposes himself to the risk of being slandered or ridiculed, or

even shut up in a lunatic asylum. But who wouldn't rather be St. Theresa

in her cell than Catharine of Russia on her throne? And in your case,

what does it come to anyway? Only that you've gone through the fiery

furnace and come out unscathed. All the better--you'll be a living

witness, a proof that it is possible to pass through this wicked Babylon

unharmed and untouched.”

“Yes, if I were a man--but with a woman it is so different! It is an

honour to a man to have conquered the world, but a disgrace to a woman

to have fought with it. Yes, believe me, I know what I'm saying. That's

the cruel tragedy in a woman's life, do what you will to hide it. And

then you are so much in the eye of the world; and besides your own

position there is your family's, your uncle's. Think what it would be if

the world pointed the finger of scorn at your--at your mission--at your

high and noble aims--and all on account of me! You would cease to love

me-and I--I----”

“Listen!” He had been shuffling restlessly on the pavement before

her. “Here I stand! Here are you! Let the waves of public opinion dash

themselves against us--we stand or fall together!” “Oh, oh, oh!”

She was crying on his breast, but with what mixed and conflicting

feelings! Joy, pain, delight, dread, hope, disappointment. She had tried

to dishonour herself in his eyes, and it would have broken her heart if

she had succeeded. But she had failed and he had triumphed, and that was

harder still to bear.

From overhead they heard the last lines of the song:

Erreicht den Hof mit Müh und Noth

In seinen Armen das Kind war todt.

“Good-night,” she whispered, and fled into the house. The lights in the

dining-room were lowered, but she found a telegram that was waiting on

the mantelpiece. It was from Sefton, the manager: “Author arrived in

London today. Hopes to be at rehearsal Monday. Please be there certain.”

The world was seizing her again, the imaginary Gloria was dragging her

back with visions of splendour and success. But she crept upstairs and

went by the drawing-room on tip-toe. “Not to-night,” she thought. “My

face is not fit to be seen to-night.”

There was a dying fire in her bedroom, and her evening gown had been

laid out on a chair in front of it. She put the gown away in a drawer,

and out of a box which she drew from beneath the bed she took a far

different costume. It was the nurse's outdoor cloak, which she had

bought for use at the hospital. She held it a moment by the tips of her

fingers and looked at it, and then put it back with a sigh.

“Gloria! is that you?” Rosa called up the stairs; and Drake's cheery

voice cried, “Won't our nightingale come down and give us a stave before

I go?”

“Too late! Just going to bed. Good-night,” she answered. Then she lit a

candle and sat down to write a letter.

“It's no use, dear John, I can not! It would be like putting bad money

into the offertory to put me into that holy work. Not that I don't

admire it, and love it, and worship it. It is the greatest work in the

world, and last week I thought I could count everything else as dross,

only remembering that I loved you and that nothing else mattered. But

now I know that this was a vain and fleeting sentiment, and that the

sights and scenes of your work repel me on a nearer view, just as the

hospital repelled me in the early mornings when the wards were being

cleaned and the wounds dressed, and before the flowers were laid about.

“Oh, forgive me, forgive me! But if I am fit to join your life at all

it can not be in London. That 'old serpent called the devil and Satan'

would be certain to torment me here. I could not live within sight and

sound of London and go on with the life you live. London would drag me

back. I feel as if it were an earlier lover, and I must fly away from

it. Is that possible? Can we go elsewhere? It is a monstrous demand,

I know. Say you can not agree to it. Say so at once--it will serve me

right.”

The stout watchman of the New Inn was calling midnight when Glory stole

out to post her letter. It fell into the letter-box with a thud, and she

crept back like a guilty thing.

XVI.

Next morning Mrs. Callender heard John Storm singing to himself before

he left his bedroom, and she was standing at the bottom of the stairs

when he came down three steps at a time.

“Bless me, laddie,” she said, “to see your face shining a body would say

that somebody had left ye a legacy or bought ye a benefice instead of

taking your church frae ye!”

“Why, yes, and better than both, and that's just what I was going to

tell you.”

“You must be in a hurry to do it, too, coming downstairs like a

cataract.”

“You came down like a cataract yourself once on a time, auntie; I'll lay

my life on that.”

“Aye, did I, and not sae lang since neither. And fools and prudes cried

'Oh!' and called me a tomboy. But, hoots; I was nought but a body born

a wee before her time. All the lasses are tomboys now, bless them, the

bright heart-some things!”

“Auntie,” said John softly, seating himself at the breakfast table,

“what d'ye think?”

She eyed him knowingly. “Nay, I'm ower thrang working to be bothered

thinking. Out with it, laddie.”

He looked wise. “Don't you remember saying--that work like mine wanted a

woman's hand in it?”

Her old eyes blinked. “Maybe I did, but what of it?”

“Well, I've taken your advice, and now a woman's hand is coming into it

to guide it and direct it.”

“It must be the right hand, though, mind that.”

“It \_will\_ be the right hand, auntie.”

“Weel, that's grand,” with another twinkle. “I thought it might be the

\_left\_, ye see, and ye might be putting a wedding-ring on it!” And then

she burst into a peal of laughter.

“However did you find it out?” he said, with looks of astonishment.

“Tut, laddie, love and a cough can not be hidden. And to think a woman

couldna see through you, too! But come,” tapping the table with both

hands, “who is she?”

“Guess.”

“Not one of your Sisters--no?” with hesitation.

“No,” with emphasis.

“Some other simpering thing, na doot-they're all alike these days.”

“But didn't you say the girls were all tomboys now?”

“And if I did, d'ye want a body to be singing the same song always? But

come, what like is she? When I hear of a lassie I like fine to know her

colour first. What's her complexion?”

“Guess again.”

“Is she fair? But what a daft auld dunce I am!--to be sure she's fair.”

“Why, how did you know that, now?”

“Pooh! They say a dark man is a jewel in a fair woman's eye, and I'll

warrant it's as true the other way about. But what's her name?”

John's face suddenly straightened and he pretended not to hear.

“What's her name?” stamping with both feet.

“Dear me, auntie, what an ugly old cap you're wearing!”

“Ugly?” reaching up to the glass. “Who says it's ugly?”

“I do.”

“Tut! you're only a bit boy, born yesterday. But, man, what's all this

botherment about telling a lassie's name?”

“I'll bring her to see you, auntie.”

“I should think you will, indeed! and michty quick, too!”

This was on Sunday, and by the first post on Monday John Storm received

Glory's letter. It fell on him like a blast out of a cloud in the black

northeast, and cut him to the heart's core. He read it again, and being

alone he burst into laughter. He took it up a third time, and when he

had finished there was something at his throat that seemed to choke him.

His first impulse was fury. He wanted to rush off to Glory and insult

her, to ask her if she was mad or believed him to be so. Because she was

a coward herself, being slave-bound to the world and afraid to fight

it face to face, did she wish to make a coward of him also--to see him

sneak away from the London that had kicked him, like a cur with its tail

between its legs?

After this there came an icy chill and an awful consciousness that

mightier forces were at work than any mere human weakness. It was the

world itself, the great pitiless world, that was dividing them again as

it had divided them before, but irrevocably now-not as a playful nurse

that puts petted children apart, but as a torrent that tears the cliffs

asunder. “Leave the world, my son, and return to your unfinished vows.”

Could it be true that this was only another reminder of his broken

obedience?

Then came pity. If Glory was slave-bound to the world, which of us was

not in chains to something? And the worst slavery of all was slavery

to self. But that was an abyss he dared not look into; and he began to

think tenderly of Glory, to tell himself how much she had to sacrifice,

to remember his anger and to be ashamed.

A week passed, and he went about his work in a helpless way, like a

derelict without rudder or sail and with the sea roaring about it. Every

afternoon when he came home from Soho Mrs. Callender would trip into the

hall wearing a new cap with a smart bow, and finding that he was alone

she would say, “Not to-day, then?”

“Not to-day,” he would answer, and they would try to smile. But seeing

the stamp of suffering on his face, she said at last, “Tut, laddie! they

love too much who die for love.”

On the Sunday afternoon following he turned again toward Clement's Inn.

He had come to a decision at last, and was calm and even content, yet

his happiness was like a gourd which had grown up in a day, and the

morrow's sun had withered it.

Glory had been to rehearsal every day that week. Going to the theatre

on Monday night she had said to herself, “There can be no harm in

rehearsing--I'm not compelled to play.” Notwithstanding her nervousness,

the author had complimented her on her passion and self-abandonment,

and going home she had thought: “I might even go through the first

performance and then give it all up. If I had a success, that would be

beautiful, splendid, almost heroic--it would be thrilling to abandon

everything.” Not hearing from John, she told herself he must be angry,

and she felt sorry for him. “He doesn't know yet how much I am going to

do.” Thus the other woman in her tempted and overcame her, and drew her

on from day to day.

Mrs. Macrae sent Lord Robert to invite her to luncheon on Sunday. “There

can be no harm in going there,” she thought. She went with Rosa, and

was charmed with the lively, gay, and brilliant company. Clever and

beautiful women, clever and handsome men, and nearly all of them of her

own profession. The mistress of the mansion kept open house after church

parade on Sunday, and she sat at the bottom of her table, dressed in

black velvet, with the Archdeacon on her right and a famous actor on

her left. Lord Robert sat at the head and talked to a lady whose remarks

were heard all over the room; but Lady Robert was nowhere to be seen;

there was a hush when her name was mentioned, and then a whispered

rumour that she had differences with her husband, and had scandalized

her mother by some act of indiscretion.

Glory's face beamed, and for the first half-hour she seemed to be on the

point of breaking into a rapturous “Well!” Nearly opposite to her at the

table sat a lady whose sleepy look and drowsy voice and airs of languor

showed that she was admired, and that she knew it. Glory found her

very amusing, and broke into little trills of laughter at her weary,

withering comments. This drew the attention of some of the men; they

found the contrast interesting. The conversation consisted first of

hints, half signs, brilliant bits of by-play, and Glory rose to it like

a fish to the May-fly. Then it fell upon bicycling and the costumes

ladies wore for it. The languid one commented upon the female fetich,

the skirt, and condemned “bloomers,” whereupon Glory declared that

they were just charming, and being challenged (by a gentleman) for her

reasons she said, “Because when a girl's got them on she feels as if

she's an understudy for a man, and may even have a chance of playing the

part itself in another and a better world.”

Then there was general laughter, and the gentleman said, “You're in the

profession yourself now, aren't you?”

“Just a stranger within your gates,” she answered; and when the

talk turned on a recent lawsuit, and the languid one said it was

inconceivable that the woman concerned could have been such a coward in

relation to the man, Glory protested that it was just as natural for

a woman to be in fear of a man (if she loved him) as to be afraid of a

mouse or to look under the bed.

“\_Ma chère\_,” said a dainty little lady sitting next but one (she had

come to London to perform in a silent play), “they tells me you's half

my countrywoman. All right. Will you not speak de French to poor me?”

And when Glory did so the little one clapped her hands and declared she

had never heard the English speak French before.

“Say French-cum-Irish,” said Glory, “or, rather, French which begat

Irish, which begat Manx!”

“Original, isn't she?” said somebody who was laughing.

“Like a sea-gull among so many pigeons!” said somebody else, and the

hothouse airs of the languid lady were lost as in a fresh gust from the

salt sea.

But her spirits subsided the moment she had recrossed the threshold. As

they were going home in the cab, past the hospital and down Piccadilly.

Rosa, who was proud and happy, said: “There! All society isn't stupid

and insipid, you see; and there are members of your own profession who

try to live up to the ideal of moral character attainable by a gentleman

in England even yet.”

“Yes, no doubt... But, Rosa, there's another kind of man altogether,

whose love has the reverence of a religion, and if I ever meet a man

like that--one who is ready to trample all the world under his feet for

me--I think--yes, I really think I shall leave everything behind and

follow him.”

“Leave everything behind, indeed! That \_would\_ be pretty! When

everything yields before you, too, and all the world and his wife are

waiting to shout your praises!”

Rosa had gone to her office, and Glory was turning over some designs for

stage costumes, when Liza came in to say that the “Farver” was coming

upstairs.

“He has come to scold me,” thought Glory, so she began to hum, to push

things about, and fill the room with noise. But when she saw his drawn

face and wide-open eyes she wanted to fall on his neck and cry.

“You have come to tell me you can't do what I suggested?” she said. “Of

course you can't.”

“No,” he said slowly, very slowly. “I have thought it all over, and

concluded that I can--that I must. Yes, I am willing to go away, Glory,

and when you are ready I shall be ready too.”

“But where--where--?”

“I don't know yet; but I am willing to wait for the unrolling of the

scroll. I am willing to follow step by step, not knowing whither. I am

willing to go where God wills, for life or death.”

“But your work in London--your great, great work----”

“God will see to that, Glory. He can do without any of us. None of us

can do without him. The sun will set without any assistance, you know,”

and the pale face made an effort to smile.

“But, John, my dear, dear John, this is not what you expected, what you

have been thinking of and dreaming of, and building your hopes upon.”

“No,” he said; “and for your sake I am sorry, very sorry. I thought of a

great career for you, Glory. Not rescue work merely--others can do that.

There are many good women in the world--nearly all women are good, but

Jew are great--and for the salvation of England, what England wants now

is a great woman.... As for me--God knows best! He has his own way of

weaning us from vanity and the snares of the devil. You were only an

instrument in his hands, my child, hardly knowing what you were doing.

Perhaps he has a work of intercession for us somewhere--far away from

here--in some foreign mission field--who can say?”

A feeling akin to terror caught her breath, and she looked up at him

with tearful eyes.

“After all, I am glad that this has happened,” he said. “It will help me

to conquer self, to put self behind my back forever, to show the world,

by leaving London, that self has not entered into my count at all, and

that I am thinking of nothing but my work.”

A warm flush rose to her cheeks as he spoke, and again she wanted to

fling herself on his neck and cry. But he was too calm for that, too sad

and too spiritual. When he rose to go she held out her hands to him, but

he only took them and carried them to his lips, and kissed them.

As soon as she was alone she flung herself down and cried, “Oh, give me

strength to follow this man, who mistakes his love of me for the love of

God!” But even while she sat with bent head and her hands over her face

the creeping sense came back as of another woman within her who was

fighting for her heart. She had conquered again, but at what a cost!

The foreign mission field--what associations had she with that? Only the

memory of her father's lonely life and friendless death.

She was feeling cold and had begun to shiver, when the door opened and

Rosa entered.

“So he \_did\_ come again?”

“Yes.”

“I thought he would,” and Rosa laughed coldly.

“What do you mean?”

“That when religious feelings take possession of a man he will stop at

nothing to gain the end he has in view.”

“Rosa,” said Glory, flushing crimson, “if you imply that my friend is

capable of one unworthy act or thought I must ask you to withdraw your

words absolutely and at once!”

“Very well, dear. I was only thinking for your own good. We working

women must not ruin our lives or let anybody else ruin them. 'Duty,'

'self-sacrifice'--I know the old formulas, but I don't believe in them.

Obey your own heart, my dear, that is your first duty. A man like Storm

would take you out of your real self, and stop your career, and----”

“Oh, my career, my career! I'm tired to death of hearing of it!”

“Glory!”

“And who knows? I may not go on with it, after all.”

“If you have lost your sense of duty to yourself, have you forgotten

your duty to Mr. Drake? Think what Mr. Drake has done for you!”

“Mr. Drake! Mr. Drake! I'm sick of that too.”

“How strange you are to-night, Glory!”

“Am I? So are you. It is Mr. Drake here and Mr. Drake there! Are you

trying to force me into his arms?”

“Is it you that says that, Glory--you? and to me, too? Don't you see

that this is a different case altogether? And if I thought of my own

feelings only--consulted my own heart----”

“Rosa!”

“Ah! Is it so very foolish? Yes, he is young and handsome, and rich and

brilliant, while I--I am ridiculous.”

“No, no, Rosa; I don't mean that.”

“I do, though; and when you came in between us--young and beautiful and

clever--everything that I was not, and could never hope to be--and he

was so drawn to you--what was I to do? Nurse my hopeless and ridiculous

love--or think of him--his happiness?”

“Rosa, my poor dear Rosa, forgive me! forgive me!”

An hour later, dinner being over, they had returned to the drawing-room.

Rosa was writing at the table, and there was no sound in the room except

the scratching of her pen, the falling of the slips of “copy,” and the

dull reverberation of the bell of St. Clement's Danes, which was ringing

for evening service. Glory was sitting at the desk by the window, with

her head on her hands, looking down into the garden. Out of the dead

load at her heart she kept saying to herself: “Could I do that? Could

I give up the one I loved for his own good, putting myself back, and

thinking of him only?” And then a subtle hypocrisy stole over her

and she thought, “Yes I could, I could!” and in a fever of nervous

excitement she began to write a letter:

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and so with a woman's will. I can

not go abroad with you, dear, because I can not allow myself to break

up your life, for it \_would\_ be that--it would, it would, you know it

would! There are ten thousand men good enough for the foreign mission

field, but there is only one man in the world for your work in London.

This is one of the things hidden from the wise, and revealed to children

and fools. It would be wrong of me to take you away from your great

scene. I daren't do it. It would be too great a responsibility. My

conscience must have been dead and buried when I suggested such a

possibility! Thank God, it has had a resurrection, and it is not yet too

late.”

But when the letter was sealed and stamped, and sent out to the post,

she thought: “I must be mad, and there is no method in my madness

either. What do I want--to join his life in London?” And then

remembering what she had written, it seemed as if the other woman must

have written it--the visionary woman, the woman she was making herself

into day by day.

XVII.

John Storm had left home early on Monday morning. It was the last day

of his tenancy of the clergy-house, and there was much to do at Soho.

Toward noon he made his way to the church in Bishopsgate Street for the

first time since he had left the Brotherhood. It was midday service,

and the little place was full of business men with their quick, eyes and

eager faces. The Superior preached, and the sermon was on the religious

life. We were each composed of two beings, one temporal, the other

eternal, one carnal, the other spiritual. Life was a constant warfare

between these two nearly matched forces, and often the victory seemed

to sway from this side to that. Our enemy with the chariots of iron was

ourselves. There was a Judas in each one of us ready to betray us with

a kiss if allowed. The lusts of the flesh were the most deadly sins,

absolute chastity the most pleasing to God of all virtues. Did we desire

to realize what the religious life could be? Then let us reflect upon

the news which had come from the South Seas. What was the word that had

fallen that morning on all Christendom like a thunderclap, say, rather,

like the blast of a celestial trumpet? Father Damien was dead! Think of

his lonely life in that distant island where doomed men lived out their

days. Cut off from earthly marriage, with no one claiming his affection

in the same way as Christ, he was free to commit himself entirely to God

and to God's afflicted children. He was truly married to Christ. Christ

occupied his soul as Lord and spouse. Glorious life! Glorious death!

Eternal crown of glory waiting for him in the glory everlasting!

When the service ended John Storm stepped up to speak to the Father. His

wide-open eyes were flaming; he was visibly excited. “I came to ask a

question,” he said, “but it is answered already. I will follow Father

Damien and take up his work. I was thinking of the mission field, but

my doubt was whether God had called me, and I had great fear of going

uncalled. God brought me here this morning, not knowing what I was to

do, but now I know, and my mind is made up at last.”

The Father was not less moved. They went out into the courtyard together

and walked to and fro, planning, scheming, contriving, deciding.

“You'll take the vows first, my son?”

“The vows?”

“The life vows.”

“But--but will that be necessary?”

“It will be best. Think what a peculiar appeal it have for those

poor doomed creatures! They are cut off from the world by a terrible

affliction, but you will be cut off by the graciousness of a Christ-fed

purity. They are lepers made of disease; you will be as a leper for the

kingdom of heaven's sake.”

“But, Father--if that be so--how much greater the appeal will be if--if

a woman goes out also! Say she is young and beautiful and of great

gifts?”

“Brother Andrew may go with you, my son.”

“Yes, Brother Andrew as well. But holy men in all ages have been bound

by ties of intimacy and affection to good women who have lived and

worked beside them.”

“Sisters, my son, elder sisters always.”

“And why not? Sister, indeed, and united to me by a great and spiritual

love.”

“We are none of us invincible, my son; let us not despise danger.”

“Danger, Father! What is the worth of my religion if it does not enable

me to defy that?”

“Well, well--do not decide too soon. I'll come to you at Soho this

evening.”

“Do. It's our last night there. I must tell my poor people what my plans

are to be. Good-bye for the present, Father, good-bye.”

“Good-bye, my son,” and as John Storm went off with a light heart and

bounding step the Father passed indoors with downcast face, saying to

himself with a sigh, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest

he fall.”

It was Lord Mayor's Day again, the streets were thronged, and John Storm

was long in forging his way home. Glory's letter was waiting for him,

and he tore it open with nervous fingers, but when he had read it he

laughed aloud. “God bless her! But she doesn't know everything yet.”

Mrs. Callender was out in the carriage; she would be back for lunch, and

the maid was laying the cloth; but he would not wait. After scribbling

a few lines in pencil to tell of his great resolve, he set off to

Clement's Inn. The Strand was less crowded when he returned to it, and

the newsboys were calling the evening papers with “Full Memoir of Father

Damien.”

\* \* \* \* \*

On coming home from rehearsal Glory had found the costume for her third

act, her great act, awaiting her. All day long she had been thinking

of her letter to John, half ashamed of it, half regretting it, almost

wishing it could be withdrawn. But the dress made a great tug at her

heart, and she could not resist the impulse to try it on. The moment

she had done so the visionary woman whose part she was to play seemed to

take possession of her, and shame and regret were gone.

It was a magnificent stage costume, green as the grass in spring

with the morning sun on it. The gown was a splendid brocade with

gold-embroidered lace around the square-cut neck and about the shoulders

of the tight-made sleeves. Round her hips was a sash of golden tissue,

and its hanging ends were fringed with emeralds. A band of azure stones

encircled her head, and her fingers were covered with turquoise rings.

She went to the drawing-room, shut the door, and began to rehearse

the scene. It was where the imaginary Gloria, being vain and selfish,

trampled everything under her feet that she might possess the world and

the things of the world. Glory spoke the words aloud, forgetting they

were not her own, until she heard another voice saying, “May I come in,

dear?”

It was John at the door. She was ashamed of her costume then, but there

was no running away. “Yes, of course, come in,” she cried, trembling all

over, half afraid to be seen, and yet proud too of her beauty and her

splendour. When he entered she was laughing nervously and was about to

say, “See, this has happened before----”

But he saw nothing unusual, and she was disappointed and annoyed. Coming

in breathless, as if he had been running, he flung himself down on one

end of the couch, threw his hat on the other end, and said: “What did I

tell you, Glory? That a way would open itself, and it has!”

“Really?”

“Didn't you think of it when you saw the news in the papers this

morning?”

“What news?”

“That Father Damien is dead.”

“But can you--do you really mean that--do you intend----”

“I do, Glory--I do.”

“Then you didn't get my letter this morning?”

“Oh, yes, dear, yes; but you were only thinking for me--God bless

you!--that I was giving up a great scene for a little one. But

this--this is the greatest scene in the world, Glory. Life is a small

sacrifice; the true sacrifice is a living death, a living crucifixion.”

She felt as if he had taken her by the throat and was choking her. He

had got up and was walking to and fro, talking impetuously.

“Yes, it is a great sacrifice I am asking you to make now, dear. That

far-off island, the poor lepers, and then lifelong banishment. But God

will reward you, and with interest too. Only think, Glory! Think of

the effect of your mere presence out there among those poor doomed

creatures! A young and beautiful woman! Not a melancholy old dolt like

me, preaching and prating to them, but a bright and brilliant girl,

laughing with them, playing games with them, making mimicry for them,

and singing to them in the voice of an angel. Oh, they'll love you,

Glory, they'll worship you--you'll be next to God and his blessed mother

with them. And already I hear them saying among themselves: 'Heaven

bless her! She might have had the world at her feet and made a great

name and a great fortune, but she gave it all up--all, all, all--for

pity and love of us!' Won't it be glorious, my child? Won't it be the

noblest thing in all the world?”

And she struggled to answer, “Yes, no doubt--the noblest thing in all

the world!”

“Then you agree? Ah, I knew your heart spoke in your first letter, and

you wanted to leave London. You shall, too, for God has willed it.”

Then she recovered a little and made a nervous attempt to withdraw. “But

the church at Westminster?”

He laughed like a boy. “Oh, Golightly may have that now, and welcome.”

“But the work in London?”

“Ah, that's all right, Glory. Ever since I heard from you I have been

dealing with the bonds which bound me to London one by one, unravelling

some and breaking others. They are all discharged now, every one of

them, and I need think of them no more. Self is put behind forever, and

I can stand before God and say: 'Do with me as you will; I am ready for

anything--anything!'”

“Oh!”

“Crying, Glory? My poor, dear child! But why are you crying?”

“It's nothing!”

“Are you sure--quite sure? Am I asking too much of you? Don't let us

deceive ourselves--think----”

“Let us talk of something else now.” She began to laugh. “Look at me,

John--don't I look well to-day?”

“You always look well, Glory.”

“But isn't there any difference--this dress, for instance?”

Then his sight came back and his big eyes sparkled. “How beautiful you

are, dear!”

“Really? Do I look nice then--really?”

“My beautiful, beautiful girl!”

Her head was thrown back, and she glowed with joy.

“Don't come too near me, you know--don't crush me.”

“Nay, no fear of that--I should be afraid.”

“Not that I mustn't be touched exactly.”

“What will they think, I wonder, those poor, lost creatures, so ugly, so

disfigured?”

“And my red hair. This colour suits it, doesn't it?”

“Some Madonna, they'll say; the very picture of the mother of God

herself!”

“Are you--are you afraid of me in this frock, dear? Shall I run and take

it off?”

“No--no; let me look at you again.”

“But you don't like me to-day, for all that.”

“I?”

“Do you know you've never once kissed me since you came into the room?”

“Glory!”

“My love! my love!”

“And you,” he said, close to her lips, “are you ready for anything?”

“Anything,” she whispered.

At the next moment she was holding herself off with her arms stiff about

his neck, that she might look at him and at her lace sleeves at the same

time. Suddenly a furrow crossed his brow. He had remembered the Father's

warning, and was summoning all his strength.

“But out there I'll love you as a sister, Glory.”

“Ah!”

“For the sake of those poor doomed beings cut off from earthly love

we'll love each other as the angels love.”

“Yes, that is the highest, purest, truest love, no doubt. Still----”

“What does the old Talmud say?--'He who divorces himself from the joys

of earth weds himself to the glories of Paradise.'”

Her lashes were still wet; she was gazing deep into his eyes.

“And to think of being united in the next world, Glory--what happiness,

what ecstasy!”

“Love me in this world, dearest,” she whispered.

“You'll be their youth, Glory, their strength, their loveliness!”

“Be mine, darling, be mine!”

But the furrow crossed his brow a second time, and he disengaged himself

before their lips had met again. Then he walked about the room as

before, talking in broken sentences. They would have to leave soon--very

soon--almost at once. And now he must go back to Soho. There was so much

to do, to arrange. On reaching the door he hesitated, quivering with

love, hardly knowing how to part from her. She was standing with head

down, half angry and half ashamed.

“Well, \_au revoir\_,” he cried in a strained voice, and then fled down

the stairs. “The Father was right,” he thought. “No man is invincible.

But, thank God, it is over! It can never occur again!”

Her glow had left her, and she felt chilled and lost There was no help

for it now, and escape was impossible. She must renounce everything for

the man who had renounced everything for her. Sitting on the couch, she

dropped her head on the cushion and cried like a child. In the lowest

depths of her soul she knew full well that she could never go away, but

she began to bid good-bye in her heart to the life she had been living.

The charm and fascination of London began to pass before her like a

panorama, with all the scenes of misery and squalor left out. What a

beautiful world she was leaving behind her! She would remember it all

her life long with useless and unending regret. Her tears were flowing

through the fingers which were clasped beneath her face.

A postman's knock came to the door downstairs. The letter was from the

manager, written in the swirl and rush of theatrical life, and reading

like a telegram: “Theatre going on rapidly, men working day and night,

rehearsals advanced and scenery progressing; might we not fix this day

fortnight for the first performance?”

Inclosed with this was a letter from the author: “You are on the eve

of an extraordinary success, dear Gloria, and I write to reassure and

congratulate you. Some signs of inexperience I may perhaps observe, some

lack of ease and simplicity, but already it is a performance of so much

passion and power that I predict for it a triumphant success. A great

future awaits you. Don't shrink from it, don't be afraid of it; it is as

certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow.”

She carried the letter to her lips, then rose from the couch, and threw

up her head, closed her eyes, and smiled. The visionary woman was taking

hold of her again with the slow grip and embrace of the glacier.

Rosa came home to dine, and at sight of the new costume she cried,

“Shade of Titian, what a picture!” During dinner she mentioned that she

had met Mr. Drake, who had said that the Prince was likely to be present

at the production, having asked for the date and other particulars.

“But haven't you heard the \_great\_ news, dear? It's in all the late

editions of the evening papers.”

“What is it?” said Glory; but she saw what was coming.

“Father Storm is to follow Father Damien. That's the report, at all

events; but he is expected to make a statement at his club to-night, and

I have to be there for the paper.”

As soon as dinner was over Rosa went off to Soho, and then Glory was

brought back with a shock to the agony of her inward struggle. She

knew that her hour had arrived, and that on her action now everything

depended. She knew that she could never break the chains by which the

world and her profession held her. She knew that the other woman had

come, that she must go with her, and go for good. But the renunciation

of love was terrible. The day had been soft and beautiful. It was

falling asleep and yawning now, with a drowsy breeze that shook the

yellow leaves as they hung withered and closed on the thinning boughs

like the fingers of an old maid's hand. She was sitting at the desk by

the window, trying to write a letter. More than once she tore up the

sheet, dried her eyes, and began again. What she wrote last was this:

“It is impossible, dear John. I can not go with you to the South Seas.

I have struggled, but I can not, I can not! It is the greatest, noblest,

sublimest mission in the world, but I am not the woman for these high

tasks. I should be only a fruitless fig tree, a sham, a hypocrite. It

would be like taking a dead body with you to take me, for my heart would

not be there. You would find that out, dear, and I should be ashamed.

“And then I can not leave this life--I can not give up London. I am like

a child--I like the bustling streets, the brilliant thoroughfares, the

crowds, the bands of music, the lights at night, and the sense of

life. I like to succeed, too, and to be admired, and--yes, to hear the

clapping of hands in a theatre. You are above all this, and can look

down at it as dross, and I like you for that also. But give it all up

I can't; I haven't the strength; it is in my blood, dear, and if I part

from it I must die.

“And then I like to be fondled and coaxed and kissed, and I want so

much--oh, so much to be loved! I want somebody to tell me every day

and always how much he loves me, and to praise me and pet me and forget

everything else for me, everything, everything, even his own soul and

salvation! You can not do that; it would be sinful, and besides it

wouldn't be love as you understand it, and as it ought to be, if you are

to go out to that solemn and awful task.

“When I said I loved you I spoke the truth, dear, and yet I didn't know

what the word meant really, I didn't realize everything. I love you

still--with all my heart and soul I love you; but now I know that there

is a difference between us, that we can never come together. No, I can

not reach up to your austere heights. I am so weak; you are so strong.

Your 'strength is as the strength of ten because your heart is pure,'

while I----

“I am unworthy of your thoughts, John. Leave me to the life I have

chosen. It may be poor and vain and worthless, but it is the only life

I'm fit for. And yet I love you--and you loved me. I suppose God makes

men and women like that sometimes, and it is no use struggling.

“One kiss, dear--it is the last.”

XVIII.

John Storm went back to Victoria Square with a bright and joyful face

and found Mrs. Callender waiting for him, grim as a judge. He could

see that her eyes were large and red with weeping, but she fell on him

instantly with withering scorn.

“So you're here at last, are ye? A pretty senseless thing this is, to

be sure! What are you dreaming about? Are you bewitched or what? Do you

suppose things can be broken off in this way? You to go to the leper

islands indeed!”

“I'm called, auntie, and when God calls a man, what can he do but answer

with Samuel----”

“Tut! Don't talk sic nonsense. Besides, Samuel had some sense. He waited

to be called three times, and I havena heard this is your third time of

calling.”

John Storm laughed, and that provoked her to towering indignation. “Good

God, what are you thinking of, man? There's that puir lassie--you're

running away from her, too, aren't you? It's shameful, it's disgraceful,

it's unprincipled, and \_you\_ to do it too!”

“You needn't trouble about that, auntie,” said John; “she is going with

me.”

“What?” cried Mrs. Callender, and her face expressed boundless

astonishment.

“Yes,” said John, “you women are brimful of courage, God bless you! and

she's the bravest of you all.”

“But you'll no have the assurance to tak' that puir bit lassie to yonder

God-forsaken spot?”

“She wants to go--at least she wants to leave London.”

“What does she? Weel, weel! But didn't I say she was nought but one of

your Sisters or sic-like?--And you're going to let a slip of a girl tak'

you away frae your ain work and your ain duty--and you call yourself a

man!”

He began to coax and appease her, and before long the grim old face was

struggling between smiles and tears.

“Tut! get along wi' ye! I've a great mind, though--I'd be liking fine to

see her anyway. Now, where does she bide in London?”

“Why do you want to know that, auntie?”

“What's it to you, laddie? Can't a body call to say 'Good-bye' to a

lassie, and tak' her a wee present before going away, without asking a

man's permission?”

“I shouldn't do it, though, if I were you.”

“And why not, pray?”

“Because she's as bright as a star and as quick as a diamond, and she'd

see through you in a twinkling. Besides, I shouldn't advise----”

“Keep your advice like your salt till you're asked for it, my man--and

to think of any reasonable body giving up his work in London for

that--that----”

“Good men have gone out to the mission field, auntie.”

“Mission fiddlesticks! Just a barber's chair, fit for every comer.”

“And then this isn't the mission field exactly either.”

“Mair's the pity, and then you wouldna be running bull-neck on your

death before your time.”

“None of us can do that, auntie, for heaven is over all.”

“High words off an empty stomach, my man, so you can just keep them to

cool your parridge. But oh, dear--oh, dear! You'll forget your puir auld

Jane Callender, anyway.”

“Never, auntie!”

“Tut! don't tell me!”

“Never!”

“It's the last I'm to see of you, laddie. I'm knowing that fine--and me

that fond of you too, and looking on you as my ain son.”

“Come, auntie, come; you mustn't take it so seriously.”

“And to think a bit thing like that can make all this botherment!”

“Nay, it's my own doing--absolutely mine.”

“Aye, aye, man's the head, but woman turns it.”

They dined together and then got into the carriage for Soho. John talked

continually, with an impetuous rush of enthusiasm; but the old lady

sat in gloomy silence, broken only by a sigh. At the corner of Downing

Street he got out to call on the Prime Minister, and sent the carriage

on to the clergy-house.

A newsboy going down Whitehall was calling an evening paper. John bought

a copy, and the first thing his eye fell upon was the mention of his

own name: “The announcement in another column that Father Storm of Soho

intends to take up the work which the heroic Father Damien has just laid

down will be received by the public with mingled joy and regret--joy

at the splendid heroism which prompts so noble a resolve, regret at

the loss which the Church in London will sustain by the removal of

a clergyman of so much courage, devotion, independence, and

self-sacrifice.... That the son of a peer and heir to an earldom should

voluntarily take up a life of poverty in Soho, one of the most crowded,

criminal, and neglected corners of Christendom, was a fact of so much

significance----”

John Storm crushed the paper in his hand and threw it into the street;

but a few minutes afterward he saw another copy of it in the hands of

the Prime Minister as he came to the door of the Cabinet room to greet

him. The old man's face looked soft, and his voice had a faint tremor.

“I'm afraid you are bringing me bad news, John.”

John laughed noisily. “Do I look like it, uncle? Bad news, indeed! No,

but the best news in the world.”

“What is it, my boy?”

“I am about to be married. You've often told me I ought to be, and now

I'm going to act on your advice.”

The bleak old face was smiling. “Then the rumour I see in the papers

isn't true, after all?”

“Oh, yes, it's true enough, and my wife is to go with me.”

“But have you considered that carefully? Isn't it a terrible demand to

make of any woman? Women are more religious than men, but they are more

material also. Under the heat of religious impulse a woman is capable of

sacrifices--great sacrifices--but when it has cooled----”

“No fear of that, uncle,” said John; and then he told the Prime Minister

what he had told Mrs. Callender--that it was Glory's proposal that they

should leave London, and that without this suggestion he might not have

thought of his present enterprise. The bleak face kept smiling, but the

Prime Minister was asking himself: “What does this mean? Has she \_her

own\_ reasons for wishing to go away?”

“Do you know, my boy, that with all this talk you've not yet told me who

she is?”

John told him, and then a faint and far-off rumour out of another world

seemed to flit across his memory.

“An actress at present, you say?”

“So to speak, but ready to give up everything for this glorious

mission.”

“Very brave, no doubt, very beautiful; but what of your present

responsibilities--your responsibilities in London?”

“That's just what I came to speak about,” said John; and then his

rapturous face straightened, and he made some effort to plunge into the

practical aspect of his affairs at Soho. There was his club for

girls and his home for children. They were to be turned out of the

clergy-house tomorrow, and he had taken a shelter at Westminster.

But the means to support them were still deficient, and if there was

anything coming to him that would suffice for that purpose--if there was

enough left--if his mother's money was not all gone----

The Prime Minister was looking into John's face, watching the play of

his features, but hardly listening to what he said. “What does this

mean?” he was asking himself, in the old habitual way of the man whose

business it is to read the motives that are not revealed.

“So you are willing to leave London, after all, John?”

“Why not, uncle? London is nothing to me in itself, less than nothing;

and if that brave girl to whom it is everything----”

“And yet six months ago I gave you the opportunity of doing so, and

then----”

“Then my head was full of dreams, sir. Thank God, they are gone now, and

I am awake at last!”

“But the Church--I thought your duty and devotion to the Church----”

“The Church is a chaos, uncle, a wreck of fragments without unity,

principle, or life. No man can find foothold in it now without

accommodating his duty and his loyalty to his chances of a livelihood.

It is a career, not a crusade. Once I imagined that a man might live as

a protest against all this, but it was a dream, a vain and presumptuous

dream.”

“And then your woman movement----”

“Another dream, uncle! A whole standing army marshalled and equipped

to do battle against the world's sins toward woman could never hope for

victory. Why? Because the enemy is ourselves, and only God can contend

against a foe like that. He will, too! For the wrongs inflicted on woman

by this wicked and immoral London God will visit it with his vengeance

yet. I see it coming, it is not far off, and God help those----”

“But surely, my boy, surely it is not necessary to fly away from the

world in order to escape from your dreams? Just when it is going to be

good to you, too. It was kicking and cuffing and laughing at you only

yesterday----”

“And to-morrow it would kick and cuff and laugh at me again. Oh, it is

a cowardly and contemptible world, uncle, and happy is the man who wants

nothing of it! He is its master, its absolute master, and everybody else

is its wretched slave. Think of the people who are scrambling for fame

and titles and decorations and invitations to court! They'll all be in

their six feet by two feet some-day. And then think of the rich men who

hire detectives to watch over their children lest they should be stolen

for sake of a ransom, while they themselves, like human mill-horses, go

tramping round and round the safes which contain their securities!

Oh, miserable delusion, to think that because a nation is rich it is

therefore great! Once I thought the Church was a refuge from this worst

of the spiritual dangers of the age, and so it would have been if it

had been built on the Gospel. But it isn't; it loves the thrones of the

world and bows down to the golden calf. Poverty! Give me poverty and let

me renounce everything. Jesus, our blessed Jesus, he knew well what he

was doing in choosing to be poor, and even as a man he was the greatest

being that ever trod upon the earth.”

“But this leper island mission is not poverty merely, my dear John--it

is death, certain death, sooner or later, and God knows what news the

next mail may bring us!”

“As to that I feel I am in God's hands, sir, and he knows best what is

good for us. People talk about dying before their time, but no man ever

did or ever will or ever can do so, and it is blasphemy to think of it.

Then which of us can prolong our lives by one day or hour or minute? But

God can do everything. And what a grand inspiration to trust yourself

absolutely to him, to raise the arms heavenward which the world would

pinion to your side and cry, 'Do with me as thou wilt, I am ready for

anything--anything.'”

A tremor passed over the wrinkles about the old man's eyes, and he

thought: “All this is self-deception. He doesn't believe a word of it.

Poor boy! his heart alone is leading him, and he is the worst slave of

us all.”

Then he said aloud: “Things haven't fallen out as I expected, John,

and I am sorry, very sorry. The laws of life and the laws of love don't

always run together--I know that quite well.”

John flinched, but made no protest.

“I shall feel as if I were losing your mother a second time when you

leave me, my boy. To tell you the truth, I've been watching you

and thinking of you, though you haven't known it. And you've rather

neglected the old man. I thought you might bring your wife to me some

day, and that I might live to see your children. But that's all over

now, and there seems to be no help for it. They say the most noble and

beautiful things in the world are done in a state of fever, and perhaps

this fever of yours---H'm. As for the money, it is ready for you at any

time.”

“There can't be much left, uncle. I have gone through most of it.”

“No, John, no; the money you spent was my money--your own is still

untouched.”

“You are too good, uncle, and if I had once thought you wished to see

more of me----”

“Ah, I know, I know. It was a wise man who said it was hard to love a

woman and do anything else, even to love God himself.”

John dropped his head and turned to go.

“But come again before you leave London--if you do leave it--and now

good-bye, and God bless you!”

The news of John Storm's intention to follow Father Damien had touched

and thrilled the heart of London, and the streets and courts about St.

Mary Magdalene's were thronged with people. In their eyes he was about

to fulfil a glorious mission, and ought to be encouraged and sustained.

“Good-bye, Father!” cried one. “God bless you!” cried another. A young

woman with timid eyes stretched out her hand to him, and then everybody

attempted to do the same. He tried to answer cheerfully, but was

conscious that his throat was thick and his voice was husky. Mrs.

Pincher was at the door of the clergy-house, crying openly and wiping

her eyes. “Ain't there lepers enough in London, sir, without goin' to

the ends of the earth for 'em?” He laughed and made an effort to answer

her humorously, but for some reason both words and ideas failed him.

The club-room was crowded, and among the girls and the Sisters there

were several strange faces. Mrs. Callender sat at one end of the little

platform, and she was glowering across at the other end, where the

Father Superior stood in his black cassock, quiet and watchful, and with

the sprawling, smiling face of Brother Andrew by his side. The girls

were singing when John entered, and their voices swelled out as they saw

him pushing his way through. When the hymn ended there was silence for

a moment as if it was expected that he would speak, but he did not rise,

and the lady at the harmonium began again. Some of the young mothers

from the shelter above had brought down their little ones, and the thin,

tuneless voices could be heard among the rest:

There's a Friend for little children

Above the bright blue sky.

John had made a brave fight for it, but he was beginning to break down.

Everybody else had risen, he could not rise. An expression of fear

and at the same time of shame had come into his face. Vaguely,

half-consciously, half-reproachfully, he began to review the situation.

After all, he was deserting his post, he was running away. This was his

true scene, his true work, and if he turned his back upon it he would

be pursued by eternal regrets. And yet he must go, he must leave

everything--that alone he understood and felt.

All at once, God knows why, he began to think of something which had

happened when he was a boy. With his father he was crossing the Duddon

Sands. The tide was out, far out, but it had turned, it was galloping

toward them, and they could hear the champing waves on the beach behind.

“Run, boy, run! Give me your hand and run!”

Then he resumed the current of his former thoughts. “What was I thinking

about?” he asked himself; and when he remembered, he thought, “I will

give my hand to the heavenly Father and go on without fear.” At the

second verse he rallied, rose to his feet, and joined in the singing.

It was said afterward that his deep voice rang out above all the other

voices, and that he sang in rapid and irregular time, going faster and

faster at every line.

They had reached the last verse but one, when he saw a young girl

crushing her way toward him with a letter. She was smiling, and seemed

proud to render him this service. He was about to lay the letter aside

when he glanced at it, and then he could not put it down. It was marked

“Urgent,” and the address was in Glory's handwriting. The champing waves

were in his ears again. They were coming on and on.

A presentiment of evil crept over him and he opened the letter and

read it. Then his life fell to wreck in a moment. Its nullity, its

hopelessness, its futility, its folly, the world with its elusive joys,

love with its deceptions so cruel and so sweet-all, all came sweeping

up on him like the sea-wrack out of a storm. In an instant the truth

appeared to him, and he understood himself at last. For Glory's sake he

had sacrificed everything and deceived himself before God and man. And

yet she had failed him and forsaken him, and slipped out of his hands

in the end. The tide had overtaken and surrounded him, and the voices of

the girls and the children were like the roar of the waters in his ears.

But what was this? Why had they stopped singing? All at once he became

aware that everybody else was seated, and that he was standing alone on

the edge of the platform with Glory's letter in his hand.

“Hush! hush!” There was a strained silence, and he tried to recollect

what it was that he was expected to do. Every eye was on his face. Some

of the strangers opened note-books and sat ready to write. Then, coming

to himself, he understood what was before him, and tried to control his

voice and begin.

“Girls,” he said, but he was hardly able to speak or breathe. “Girls,”

he said again, but his strong voice shook, and he tried in vain to go

on.

One of the girls began to sob. Then another and another. It was said

afterward that nobody could look on his drawn face, so hopeless, so full

of the traces of suffering and bitter sadness, without wanting to cry

aloud. But he controlled himself at length.

“My good friends all, you came to-night to bid me Godspeed on a long

journey and I came to bid you farewell. But there is a higher power that

rules our actions, and it is little we know of our own future, or our

fate or ourselves. God bids me tell you that my leper island is to be

London, and that my work among you is not done yet.”

After saying this he stood a moment as if intending to say more, but he

said nothing. The letter crinkled in his fingers, he looked at it, an

expression of helplessness came into his face, and he sat down. And

then the Father came up to him and sat beside him, and took his hand and

comforted it as if he had been a little child.

There was another attempt to sing, but the hymn made no headway this

time, for some of the girls were crying, they hardly knew why, and

others were whispering, and the strangers were leaving the room. Two

ladies were going down the stairs.

“I felt sure he wouldn't go,” said one.

“Why so?” said the other.

“I can't tell you. I had my private reasons.”

It was Rosa Macquarrie. Going down the dark lane she came upon a woman

who had haunted the outside of the building during the past half hour,

apparently thinking at one moment of entering and at the next of going

away. The woman hurriedly lowered her veil as Rosa approached her, but

she was too late to avoid recognition.

“Glory! Is it you?”

Glory covered her face with her hands and sobbed.

“Whatever are you doing here?”

“Don't ask me, Rosa. Oh, I'm a lost woman! Lord forgive me, what have I

done?”

“My poor child!”

“Take me home, Rosa. And don't leave me to-night, dear--not to-night,

Rosa.”

And Rosa took her by the arm and led her back to Clement's Inn.

Next morning before daybreak the brothers of the Society of the Holy

Gethsemane had gathered in their church in Bishopsgate Street for Lauds

and Prime. Only the chancel was lighted up, the rest of the church was

dark, but the first gleams of dawn, were now struggling through the

eastern window against the candlelight on the altar and the gaslight on

the choir.

John Storm was standing on the altar steps and the Father was by his

side. He was wearing the cassock of the Brotherhood, and the cord with

the three knots was bound about his waist. All was silent round about,

the city was still asleep, the current of life had not yet awakened for

the day. Lauds and Prime were over, the brothers were on their knees,

and the Father was reading the last words of the dedication service.

“Amen! Amen!”

There was a stroke of the bell overhead, a door somewhere was loudly

slammed, and then the organ began to play:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.

The brothers rose and sang, their voices filled the dark place, and the

quivering sounds of the organ swelled up to the unseen roof.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty,

God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity!

The Father's cheeks were moist, but his eyes were shining and his face

was full of a great joy. John Storm was standing with bowed head. He had

made the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and surrendered his

life to God.

FOURTH BOOK.

\_SANCTUARY\_.

I.

Six months passed, and a panic terror had seized London. It was one of

those epidemic frenzies which have fallen upon great cities in former

ages of the world. The public mind was filled with the idea that London

was threatened with a serious danger; that it was verging on an awful

crisis; that it was about to be destroyed.

The signs were such as have usually been considered preparatory to the

second coming of the Messiah--a shock of earthquake which threw down a

tottering chimney (somewhere in Soho), and the expected appearance of a

comet. But this was not to be the second Advent; it was to be a disaster

confined to London.

God was about to punish London for its sins. The dishonour lay at its

door of being the wickedest city in the world. Side by side with the

development of mechanical science lifting men to the power and position

of angels, there was a moral degeneration degrading them to the level

of beasts. With an apparent aspiration after social and humanitarian

reform, there was a corruption of the public conscience and a hardening

of the public heart. London was the living picture of this startling

contrast. Impiety, iniquity, impurity, and injustice were at their

height here, and either England must forfeit her position among the

nations, or the Almighty would interpose. The Almighty was about to

interpose, and the consummation of London's wickedness was near.

By what means the destruction of London would come to pass was a matter

on which there were many theories, and the fear and consternation of the

people took various shapes. One of them was that of a mighty earthquake,

in which the dome of St. Paul's was to totter and the towers of

Westminster Abbey to rock and fall amid clouds of dust. Another was that

of an avenging fire, in which the great city was to light up the whole

face of Europe and burn to ashes as a witness of God's wrath at the sins

of men. A third was that of a flood, in which the Thames was to rise

and submerge the city, and tens of thousands of houses and hundreds of

thousands of persons were to be washed away and destroyed.

Concerning the time of the event, the popular imagination had attained

to a more definite idea. It was to occur on the great day of the Epsom

races. Derby Day was the national day. More than any day associated with

political independence, or with victory in battle, or yet with religious

sanctity, the day devoted to sport and gambling and intemperance and

immorality was England's day. Therefore the Almighty had selected that

day for the awful revelation by which he would make his power known to

man.

Thus the heart of London was once more stormed, and shame and panic ran

through it like an epidemic. The consequences were the usual ones. In

vain the newspapers published articles in derision of the madness, with

accounts of similar frenzies which had laid hold of London before.

There was a run on the banks, men sold their businesses, dissolved their

partnerships, transferred their stocks, and removed to houses outside

the suburbs. Great losses were sustained in all ranks of society, and

the only class known to escape were the Jews on the Exchange, who held

their peace and profited by their infidelity.

When people asked themselves who the author and origin of the panic was

they thought instantly and with one accord of a dark-eyed, lonely man,

who walked the streets of London in the black cassock of a monk, with

the cord and three knots which were the witness of life vows. No dress

could have shown to better advantage his dark-brown face and tall

figure. Something majestic seemed to hang about the man. His big

lustrous eyes, his faint smile with its sad expression always behind it,

his silence, his reserve, his burning eloquence when he preached--seemed

to lay siege to the imagination of the populace, and especially to take

hold as with a fiery grip of the impassioned souls of women.

A certain mystery about his life did much to help this extraordinary

fascination. When London as a whole became conscious of him it was

understood that he was in some sort a nobleman as well as a priest, and

had renounced the pleasures and possessions of the world and given up

all for God. His life was devoted to the poor and outcast, especially

to the Magdalenes and their unhappy children. Although a detached

monk still and living in obedience to the rule of one of the monastic

brotherhoods of the Anglican Church, he was also vicar of a parish in

Westminster. His church was a centre of religious life in that abandoned

district, having no fewer than thirty parochial organizations connected

with it, including guilds, clubs, temperance societies, savings banks,

and, above all, shelters and orphanages for the girls and their little

ones, who were the vicar's especial care.

His chief helpers were a company of devoted women, drawn mainly from

the fashionable fringe which skirted his squalid district and banded

together as a Sisterhood. For clerical help he depended entirely on the

brothers of his society, and the money saved by these voluntary agencies

he distributed among the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate. Money of

his own he had none, and his purse was always empty by reason of his

free-handedness. Rumour spoke of a fortune of many thousands which had

been spent wholly on others in the building or maintenance of school

and hospital, shelter and refuge. He lived a life of more than Christian

simplicity, and was seen to treat himself with constant disregard of

comfort and convenience. His only home was two rooms (formerly

assigned to the choir) on the ground floor under his church, and it was

understood that he slept on a hospital bed, wrapped in the cloak which

in winter he wore over his cassock. His personal servant in these

cell-like quarters was a lay brother from his society--a big ungainly

boy with sprawling features who served him and loved him and looked up

to him with the devotion of a dog. A dog of other kind he had also--a

bloodhound, whose affection for him was a terror to all who awakened

its jealousy or provoked its master's wrath. People said he had learned

renunciation and was the most Christlike man they had ever known. He was

called “The Father.”

Such was the man with whom the popular imagination associated the idea

of the panic, but what specific ground there was for laying upon him

the responsibility of the precise predictions which led to it none could

rightly say. It was remembered afterward that every new folly had been

ascribed to him. “The Father says so and so,” or “The Father says such

and such will come to pass,” and then came prophecies which were the

remotest from his thoughts. No matter how wild or extravagant the

assertion, if it was laid upon him there were people ready to believe

it, so deep was the impression made on the public mind by this priest

in the black cassock with the bloodhound at his heels, so strong was the

assurance that he was a man with the breath of God in him.

What was known with certainty was that the Father preached against

the impurities and injustices of the age with a vehemence never heard

before, and that when he spoke of the wickedness of the world toward

woman, of the temptations that were laid before her--temptations of

dress, of luxury, of false work and false fame--and then of the cruel

neglect and abandonment of woman when her summer had gone and her winter

had come, his lips seemed to be touched as by a live coal from the altar

and his eyes to blaze as with Pentecostal fire. Cities and nations which

countenanced and upheld such corruptions of a false civilization would

be overtaken by the judgment of God. That judgment was near, it was

imminent; and but for the many instances in which the life of the rich,

the great, and the powerful was redeemed by the highest virtue, this

pitiful farce of a national existence would have been played out

already; but for the good men still found in Sodom, the city of

abominations must long since have been destroyed. People there were to

laugh at these predictions, but they were only throwing cold water on

lime; the more they did so the more it smoked.

Little by little a supernatural atmosphere gathered about the Father as

a man sent from God. One day he visited a child who was sick with a bad

mouth, and touching the child's mouth he said, “It will be well soon.”

The child recovered immediately, and the idea started that he was a

healer. People waited for him that they might touch his hand. Sometimes

after service he had to stand half an hour while the congregation filed

past him. Hard-headed persons, sane and acute in other relations of

life, were heard to protest that on shaking hands with him an electric

current passed through them. Sick people declared themselves cured by

the sight of him, and charlatans sold handkerchiefs on pretence that he

had blessed them. He repeatedly protested that it was not necessary to

touch or even to see him. “Your faith alone can make you whole.” But

the frenzy increased, the people crowded upon him and he was followed

through the streets for his blessing.

Somebody discovered that he was born on the 25th of December, and was

just thirty-three years of age. Then the madness reached its height. A

certain resemblance was observed in his face and head to the traditional

head and face of Christ, and it was the humour of the populace to

discover some mystical relations between him and the divine figure.

Hysterical women kissed his hand and even hailed him as their Saviour.

He protested and remonstrated, but all to no purpose. The delusion grew,

and his protestations helped it.

As the day approached that was to be big with the fate of London,

his church, which had been crowded before, was now besieged. He was

understood to preach the hope that in the calamity to befall the city a

remnant would be saved, as Israel was saved from the plagues of Egypt.

Thousands who were too poor to leave London had determined to spend the

night of the fateful day in the open air, and already they were

going out into the fields and the parks, to Hampstead, Highgate, and

Blackheath. The panic was becoming terrible and the newspapers were

calling upon the authorities to intervene. A danger to the public peace

was threatened, and the man who was chiefly to blame for it should be

dealt with at once. No matter that he was innocent of active

sedition, no matter that he was living a life devoted to religious and

humanitarian reforms, no matter that his vivid faith, his trust in God,

and his obedience to the divine will were like a light shining in a dark

place, no matter that he was not guilty of the wild extravagance of

the predictions of his followers--“the Father” was a peril, he was a

panic-maker, and he should be arrested and restrained.

The morning of Derby Day broke gray and dull and close. It was one of

those mornings in summer which portend a thunderstorm and great heat.

In that atmosphere London awoke to two great fevers--the fever of

superstitious fear and the fever of gambling and sport.

II.

But London is a monster with many hearts; it is capable of various

emotions, and even at that feverish time it was at the full tide of a

sensation of a different kind entirely. This was a new play and a new

player. The play was “risky”; it was understood to present the fallen

woman in her naked reality, and not as a soiled dove or sentimental

plaything. The player was the actress who performed this part. She was

new to the stage, and little was known of her, but it was whispered

that she had something in common with the character she personated. Her

success had been instantaneous: her photograph was in the shop windows,

it had been reproduced in the illustrated papers, she had sat to famous

artists, and her portrait in oils was on the line at Burlington House.

The play was the latest work of the Scandinavian dramatist, the actress

was Glory Quayle.

At nine o'clock on the morning of Derby Day Glory was waiting in the

drawing-room of the Garden House, dressed in a magnificent outdoor

costume of pale gray which seemed to wave like a ripe hayfield. She

looked paler and more nervous than before, and sometimes she glanced at

the clock on the mantelpiece and sometimes looked away in the distance

before her while she drew on her long white gloves and buttoned them.

Rosa Macquarrie came upstairs hurriedly. She was smartly dressed in

black with red roses and looked bright and brisk and happy.

“He has sent Benson with the carriage to ask us to drive down,” said

Rosa. “Must have some engagement surely. Let us be off, dear. No time to

lose.”

“Shall I go, I wonder?” said Glory, with a strange gravity.

“Indeed yes, dear. Why not? You've not been in good spirits lately, and

it will do you good. Besides, you deserve a holiday after a six months'

season. And then it's such a great day for \_him\_, too----”

“Very well, I'll go,” said Glory, and at that moment a twitch of her

nervous fingers broke a button off one of the gloves. She drew it off,

threw both gloves on to a side table, took up another pair that lay

there, and followed Rosa downstairs. An open carriage was waiting for

them in the outer court of the inn, and ten minutes afterward they drew

up in a narrow street off Whitehall under a wide archway which opened

into the large and silent quadrangle leading to the principal public

offices. It was the Home Office; the carriage had come for Drake.

Drake had seen changes in his life too. His father was dead and he had

succeeded to the baronetcy. He had also inherited a racing establishment

which the family had long upheld, and a colt which had been entered for

the Derby nearly three years ago was to run in the race that day. Its

name was Ellan Vannin, and it was not a favourite. Notwithstanding

the change in his fortunes, Drake still held his position of private

secretary to the Secretary of State, but it was understood that he was

shortly to enter public life under the wing of the Government, and to

stand for the first constituency that became vacant. Ministers predicted

a career for him; there was nothing he might not aspire to, and hardly

anything he might not do.

Parliament had adjourned in honour of the day on which the “Isthmian

games” were celebrated, and the Home Secretary, as leader of the Lower

House, had said that horse-racing was “a noble and distinguished

sport deserving of a national holiday.” But the Minister himself, and

consequently his secretary, had been compelled to put in an appearance

at their office for all that. There was urgent business demanding prompt

attention.

In the large green room of the Home Office overlooking the empty

quadrangle, the Minister, dressed in a paddock coat, received a

deputation of six clergymen. It included Archdeacon Wealthy, who served

as its spokesman. In a rotund voice, strutting a step and swinging

his glasses, the Archdeacon stated their case. They had come, most

reluctantly and with a sense of pain and grief and humiliation, to make

representations about a brother clergyman. It was the notorious Mr.

Storm--“Father” Storm, for he was drawing the people into the Roman

obedience. The man was bringing religion into ridicule and contempt, and

it was the duty of all who loved their mother Church----

“Pardon me, Mr. Archdeacon, we have nothing to do with that,” said

the Minister. “You should go to your Bishop. Surely he is the proper

person----”

“We've been, sir,” said the Archdeacon, and then followed an explanation

of the Bishop's powerlessness. The Church provided no funds to protect

a Bishop from legal proceedings in inhibiting a vicar guilty of this

ridiculous kind of conduct. “But the man comes within the power of the

secular authorities, sir. He is constantly inciting people to assemble

unlawfully to the danger of the public peace.”

“How? How?”

“Well, he is a fanatic, a lunatic, and has put out monstrous and

ridiculous predictions about the destruction of London, causing

disorderly crowds to assemble about his church. The thoroughfares are

blocked, and people are pushed about and assaulted. Indeed, things have

come to such a pass that now--to-day----”

“Pardon me again, Mr. Archdeacon, but this seems to be a simple matter

for the police. Why didn't you go to the Commissioner at Scotland Yard?”

“We did, sir, but he said--you will hardly believe it, but he

actually affirmed--that as the man had been guilty of no overt act of

sedition----”

“Precisely--that would be my view too.”

“And are we, sir, to wait for a riot, for death, for murder, before the

law can be put in motion? Is there no precedent for proceeding before

anything serious--I may say alarming----”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the Minister, glancing impatiently at his watch,

“I can only promise you that the matter shall have proper attention. The

Commissioner shall be seen, and if a summons----”

“It is too late for that now, sir. The man is a dangerous madman and

should be arrested and put under restraint.”

“I confess I don't quite see what he has done; but if----”

The Archdeacon drew himself up. “Because a clergyman is well

connected--has high official connections indeed----But surely it is

better that one man should be put under control, whoever he is, than

that the whole Church and nation should be endangered and disgraced.”

“Ah----H'm!----H'm! I think I've heard that sentiment before

somewhere, Mr. Archdeacon. But I'll not detain you now. If a warrant

is necessary----” and with vague promises and plausible speeches

the Minister bowed the deputation out of the room. Then he pisht and

pshawed, swung a field glass across his shoulder, and prepared to leave

for the day.

“Confound them! How these Christians love each other! I leave it with

you, Drake. When the matter was mentioned at Downing Street the Prime

Minister told us to act without regard to his interest in the young

priest. If there's likely to be a riot let the Commissioner get his

warrant--Heigho! Ten-thirty! I'm off! Good-day!”

Some minutes afterward Drake himself, having written to Scotland Yard,

followed his chief down the private staircase to the quadrangle, where

Glory and Rosa were waiting in the carriage under the arch.

In honour of the event in which his horse was to play a part, Drake had

engaged a coach to take a party of friends to the Downs. They assembled

at a hotel in the Buckingham Palace Road. Lord Robert was there, dressed

in the latest fashion, with boots of approved Parisian shape and a

necktie of crying colours. Betty Bellman was with him, in a red and

white dress and a large red hat. There was a lady in pale green with a

light bonnet, another in gray and white, and another in brightest blue.

They were a large, smart, and even gorgeous company, chiefly theatrical.

Before eleven o'clock they were spinning along the Kennington Road on

their way to Epsom.

Drake himself drove and Glory occupied the seat of honour by his side.

She was looking brighter now, and was smiling and laughing and making

little sallies in response to her companion's talk. He was telling her

all about the carnival. The Derby was the greatest race the world over.

It was run for about six thousand sovereigns, but the total turnover of

the meeting was probably a million of money. Thus on its business side

alone it was a great national enterprise, and the puritans who would

abolish it ought to think of that. A race-horse cost about three hundred

a year to keep, but of course nobody maintained his racing establishment

on his winnings. Nearly everybody had to bet, and gambling was not so

great an offence as some people supposed. The whole trade of the

world was of the nature of a gamble, life itself was a gamble, and the

race-course was the only market in the world where no man could afford

to go bankrupt, or be a defaulter and refuse to pay.

They were now going by Clapham Common with an unbroken stream of

vehicles of every sort--coaches with outriders, landaus, hansom cabs,

omnibuses, costers' spring carts and barrows. Every coach carried its

horn, and every horn was blown at the approach to every village. The

sun was hot, and the roads were rising to the horses' fetlocks in dust.

Drake was pointing out some of their travelling companions. That large

coach going by at a furious gallop was the coach of the Army and Navy

Club; that barouche with its pair of grays and its postilion belonged

to a well-known wine merchant; that carriage with its couple of leaders

worth hundreds apiece was the property of a prosperous publican; that

was the coach which usually ran between Northumberland Avenue and

Virginia Water, and its seats were let out at so much apiece, usually

to clerks who practised innocent frauds to escape from the city; those

soldiers on the omnibus were from Wellington Barracks on “Derby leave”;

and those jolly tars with their sweethearts, packed like herrings in a

car, were the only true sportsmen on the road and probably hadn't the

price of a glass of rum on any race of the day. Going by road to the

Derby was almost a thing of the past; smart people didn't often do it,

but it was the best fun anyway, and many an old sport tooled his team on

the road still.

Glory grew brighter at every mile they covered. Everything pleased or

amused or astonished her. With the charm born of a vivid interest in

life she radiated happiness over all the company. Some glimpses of the

country girl came back, her soul thrilled to the beauty of the world

around, and she cried out like a child at sight of the chestnut and red

hawthorn, and at the scent of spring with which the air was laden. From

time to time she was recognised on the road, people raised their hats to

her, and Drake made no disguise of his beaming pride. He leaned back to

Rosa, who was sitting on the seat behind, and whispered, “Like herself

to-day, isn't she?”

“Why shouldn't she be? With all the world at her feet and her future on

the knees of the gods!” said Rosa.

But a shade of sadness came over Glory's face, as if the gay world and

its amusements had not altogether filled a void that was left somewhere

in her heart. They were drawing up to water the horses at the old

“Cock” at Sutton, and a brown-faced woman with big silver earrings and a

monster hat and feather came up to the coach to tell the “quality” their

fortunes.

“Oh, let us, Glo,” cried Betty. “I'd love it of all things, doncher

know.”

The gipsy had held out her hand to Glory. “Let me look at your palm,

pretty lady.”

“Am I to cross it with silver first?”

“Thank you kindly! But must I tell you the truth, lady?”

“Why yes, mother. Why not?”

“Then you're going to lose money to-day, lady; but never mind, you shall

be fortunate in the end, and the one you love shall be yours.”

“That's all right,” cried the gentlemen in chorus. The ladies tittered,

and Glory turned to Drake and said, “A pair of gloves against Ellan

Vannin.”

“Done,” said Drake, and there was general laughter.

The gipsy still held Glory's hand, and looking up at Drake out of the

corner of her eyes, she said: “I won't tell you what colour he is,

pretty lady, but he is young and tall, and, though he is a gorgio, he is

the kind a Romany girl would die for. Much trouble you'll have with him,

and because of his foolishness and your own unkindness you'll put seven

score miles between you. You like to live your life, lady, and as men

drown their sorrows in drink, so do you drown yours in pleasure. But it

will all come right at last, lady, and those who envy and hate you now

will kiss the ground you walk on.”

“Glo,” said Betty, “I'm surprised at ye, dearest, listenin' to such

clipperty clapper.”

Glory did not recover her composure after this incident until they

came near the Downs. Meantime the grooms had blown their horns at many

villages hidden in the verdure of charming hollows, and the coaches had

overtaken the people who had left London earlier in the day to make

the journey afoot. Boy tramps, looking tired already--“Wish ye luck,

gentlemen”; fat sailors and mutilated colliers playing organs--'Twas in

Trafalgar Bay, and Come Whoam to thee Childer and Me; tatterdemalions

selling the C'rect Card-“on'y fourpence, and I've slep' out on the Downs

last night, s'elp me”--and all the ragged army of the maimed and the

miserable who hang on the edge of a carnival.

Among this wreckage, as they skimmed over it on the coach, there was one

figure more grotesque than the rest, a Polish Jew in his long kaftan

and his worn Sabbath hat, going along alone, triddle-traddle, in his

slippers without heels. Lord Robert was at the moment teasing Betty into

a pet by christening her “The Elephant,” in allusion to her stoutness.

But somebody called his attention to the Jew, and he screwed his glass

to his eye and cried, “Father Storm, by Jove!”

The nickname was taken up by other people on the coach, and also by

people on other coaches, and “Father Storm!” was thrown at the poor

scarecrow as a missile from twenty quarters at once. Glory's colour was

rising to her ears, and Drake was humming a tune to cover her confusion.

But Betty was asking, “Who was Father Storm, if you please?” and Lord

Robert was saying, “Bless my stars, this is something new, don't you

know! Here's somebody who doesn't know Father Storm! Father Storm,

my dear Elephant, is the prophet, the modern Jonah, who predicts that

Nineveh--that is to say, London--is to be destroyed this very day!”

“He must be balmy!” said Betty, and the lady in blue went into fits of

laughter.

“Yes,” said Lord Robert, “and all because wicked men like ourselves

insist on enjoying ourselves on a day like this with pretty people like

you.”

“Well, he \_is\_ a cough-drop!” said Betty. The lady in blue asked what

was “balmy” and a “cough-drop,” and Lord Robert said:

“Betty means that the good Father is crazy--silly--stupid--cracked in

the head in short----”

But Glory could bear no more. It was an insult to John Storm to be sat

upon in judgment by such a woman. With a fiery jet of temper she turned

about and said, “Pity there are not more heads cracked, then, if it

would only let a little of the light of heaven into them.”

“Oh, if it's like that----” began Betty, looking round significantly,

and Lord Robert said, “It \_is\_ like that, dear Elephant, and if our

charming hurricane will pardon me, I'm not surprised that the man has

broken out as a Messiah, and if the authorities don't intervene----”

“Hold your tongue, Robert!” cried Drake. “Listen, everybody!”

They were climbing on to the Downs and could hear the deep hum of the

people on the course. “My!” said Betty. “Well!” said the lady in blue.

“It's like a beehive with the lid off,” said Glory.

As they passed the railway station the people who had come by train

poured into the road and the coach had to slow down. “They must have

come from the four winds of heaven,” said Glory.

“Wait, only wait!” said Drake.

Some minutes afterward everybody drew breath. They were on the top of

the common and had a full view of the course. It was a vast sea of human

beings stretched as far as the eye could reach--a black moving ocean

without a glimpse of soil or grass. The race track itself was a river of

people: the Grand Stand, tier on tier, was black from its lawns at the

bottom to its sloping gallery on top; and the “Hill” opposite was a

rocky coast of carriages, booths, carts, and clustering crowds. Glory's

eyes seemed to leap out of her head. “It's a nation!” she said with

panting breath. “An empire!”

They were diving into these breaking, plashing, plunging waters of human

life with their multitudinous voices of laughter and speech, and Glory

was looking at a dark figure in the hollow below which seemed to stand

up above the rest, when Drake cried:

“Sit hard, everybody! We'll take the hill at a gallop.”

Then to the crack of the whip, the whoop of the driver, and the blast

of the horn, the horses flew down like the wind. Betty screamed, Rosa

groaned, and Glory laughed and looked up at Drake in her delight. When

the coach drew up on the other side of the hollow, the bell was ringing

at the Grand Stand as signal for another race, and the dark figure had

disappeared.

III.

That morning, when John Storm went to take seven-o'clock celebration,

the knocker-up with his long stick had not yet finished his rounds

in the courts and alleys about the church, but the costers with their

barrows and donkeys, their wives and their children, were making an

early start for Epsom. There were many communicants, and it was eight

o'clock before he returned to his rooms. By that time the postman had

made his first delivery and there was a letter from the Prime Minister.

“Come to Downing Street as soon as this reaches you. I must see you

immediately.”

He ate his breakfast of milk and brown bread, said “Good-bye, Brother

Andrew, I shall be back for evening service,” whistled to the dog, and

set out into the streets. But a sort of superstitious fear had taken

hold of him, as if an event of supreme importance in his life was

impending, and before answering his uncle's summons he made a round

of the buildings in the vicinity which were devoted to the work of his

mission. His first visit was to the school. The children had assembled,

and they were being marshalled in order by the Sisters and prepared for

their hymn and prayer.

“Good-morning, Father.”

“Good-morning, children.”

Many of them had presents for him--one a flower, another a biscuit,

another a marble, and yet another an old Christmas card. “God bless

them, and protect them!” he thought, and he left the school with a full

heart.

His last visit was to the men's shelter which he had established under

the management of his former “organ man,” Mr. Jupe. It was a bare place,

a shed which had been a stable and was now floored and ceiled. Beds

resembling the bunks in the foc's'le of a ship lined the walls. When

these were full the lodgers lay on the ground. A blanket only was

provided. The men slept in their clothes, but rolled up their coats for

pillows. There was a stove where they might cook their food if they had

money to buy any. A ha'p'orth of tea and sugar mixed, a ha'p'orth of

bread, and a ha'p'orth of butter made a royal feast.

Going through the square in which his church stood he passed a smart gig

at the door of a public-house that occupied the corner of a street. The

publican in holiday clothes was stepping up to the driver's seat, and

a young soldier, smoking a cigarette, was taking the place by his side.

“Morning, Father, can you tip us the winner?” said the publican with a

grin, while the soldier, with an impudent smile, cried “Ta-ta” over his

shoulder to the second story of a tenement house, where a young woman

with a bloated and serious face and a head mopped up in curl-papers was

looking down from an open window.

It was nine o'clock when John Storm reached the Prime Minister's house.

A small crowd of people had followed him to the door. “His lordship

is waiting for you in the garden, sir,” said the footman, and John was

conducted to the back.

In a shady little inclosure between Downing Street and the Horse Guards

Parade the Prime Minister was pacing to and fro. His head was bent, his

step was heavy, he looked harassed and depressed. At sight of John's

monkish habit he started with surprise and faltered uneasily. But

presently, sitting by John's side on a seat under a tree, and keeping

his eyes away from him, he resumed their old relations and said:

“I sent for you, my boy, to warn you and counsel you. You must give up

this crusade. It is a public danger, and God knows what harm may come

of it! Don't suppose I do not sympathize with you. I do--to a certain

extent. And don't think I charge you with all the follies of this

ridiculous distemper. I have followed you and watched you, and I know

that ninety-nine hundredths of this madness is not yours. But in the eye

of the public you are responsible for the whole of it, and that is the

way of the world always. Enthusiasm is a good thing, my boy; it is the

rainbow in the heaven of youth, but it may go too far. It may be hurtful

to the man who nourishes it and dangerous to society. The world classes

it with lunacy and love and so forth among the nervous accidents of

life; and the humdrum healthy-minded herd always call that man a fool

and a weakling or else a fanatic and a madman, in whom the grand errors

of human nature are due to an effort--may I not say, a vain effort?--to

live up to a great ideal.” There were nervous twitchings over the

muscles of John's face. “Come, now, come, for the sake of peace and

tranquillity, lest there should be disorder and even death, let this

matter rest. Think, my boy, think, we are as much concerned for the

world's welfare as you can be, and we have higher claims and heavier

responsibilities. I can not raise a hand to help you, John. In the

nature of things I can not defend you. I sent for you because--because

you are your mother's son. Don't cast on me a heavier burden than I can

bear. Save yourself and spare me.”

“What do you wish me to do, uncle?”

“Leave London immediately and stay away until this tumult has settled

down.”

“Ah, that is impossible, sir.”

“Impossible?”

“Quite impossible, and though I did not make these predictions about

the destruction of London, yet I believe we are on the eve of a great

change.”

“You do?”

“Yes, and if you had not sent for me I should have called on you, to ask

you to set aside a day for public prayer that God may in his mercy

avert the calamity that is coming or direct it to the salvation of his

servants. The morality of the nation is on the decline, uncle, and

when morality is lacking the end is not far off. England is given up

to idleness, pomp, dissolute practices, and pleasure--pleasure, always

pleasure. The vice of intemperance, the mania for gambling, these are

the vultures that are consuming the vitals of our people. Look at the

luxury of the country--a ludicrous travesty of national greatness!

Look at the tastes and habits of our age--the deadliest enemies of true

religion! And then look at the price we are paying in what the devil

calls 'the priestesses of society' for the tranquillity of the demon of

lust!”

“But my boy, my dear boy----”

“Oh, yes, uncle, yes, I know, I know, many humanitarian schemes are

afloat and we think we are not indifferent to the condition of the poor.

But contrast the toiling women of East London with the idlers of Hyde

Park in a London season. Other nations have professed well with their

lips while their hearts have been set on wealth and pleasure. And they

have fallen! Yes, sir, in ancient Asia as well as in modern Europe they

have always fallen. And unless we unglue ourselves from the vanities

which imperil our existence we shall fall too. The lust of pleasure and

the lust of wealth bring their own revenges. In the nation as well as

the individual the Almighty destroys them as of old.”

“True--true!”

“Then how can I hold my peace or run away while it is the duty of

Christians, of patriots, to cry out against this danger? On the soul of

every one of us the duty rests, and who am I that I should escape from

it? Oh, if the Church only realized her responsibility, if she only kept

her eyes open----”

“She has powerful reasons for keeping them closed, my son,” said the

Minister, “and always will have until the Establishment is done away

with. It is coming to that some day, but meantime have a care. The

clergy are not your friends, John. Statesmen know too well the clerical

cruelty which shelters itself behind the secular arm. It is an old

story, I think, and you may find instances of that also in your ancient

Palestine. But beware, my boy, beware----”

“'Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated

me before it hated you.'”

The exaltation of John's manner was increasing, and again the Prime

Minister became uneasy, as if fearing that the young monk by his side

would ask him next to kneel and pray.

“Ah, well,” he said, rising, “I suppose there is no help for it, and

matters must take their own course.” Then he broke into other subjects,

talked of his brother, John's father, whom he had lately heard from. His

health was failing, he could not last very long; a letter from his son

now might make all things well.

John was silent, his head was down, but the Prime Minister could see

that his words took no effect. Then his bleak old face smiled a wintry

smile as he said:

“But you are not mending much in one way, my boy. Do you know you've

never once been here since the day you came to tell me you were to be

married, and intended to follow in the footsteps of Father Damien?”

John flinched, and the muscles of his face twitched nervously again.

“That was an impossible enterprise, John. No wonder the lady couldn't

suffer you to follow it. But she might have allowed you to see a lonely

old kinsman for all that.” John's pale face was breaking, and his breath

was coming fast. “Well, well,” taking his arm, “I'm not reproaching you,

John. There are passions of the soul which eat up all the rest, I know

that quite well, and when a man is under the sway of them he has neither

father nor uncle, neither kith nor kin. Good-bye! ... Ah, this way

out--this way.”

The footman had stepped up to the Minister and whispered something about

a crowd in front of the house, and John was passed out of the garden by

the back door into the park.

Three hours afterward the frequenters of Epsom racecourse saw a man in

a black cassock get up into an unoccupied wagonette and make ready to

speak. He was on the breast of “The Hill,” directly facing the Grand

Stand, in a close pack of carriages, four-in-hands, landaus, and

hansoms, filled with gaily dressed women in pink and yellow costumes,

drinking champagne and eating sandwiches, and being waited upon by

footmen in livery. It was the interval between two events of the race

meeting, and beyond the labyrinth of vehicles there was a line of

betting men in outer garments of blue silk and green alpaca, standing

on stools under huge umbrellas and calling the odds to motley crowds of

sweltering people on foot.

“Men and women,” he began, and five thousand faces seemed to rise at the

sound of his voice. The bookmakers kept up their nasal cries of “I lay

on the field!” “Five to-one bar one!” But the crowd turned and deserted

them. “It's the Father,” “Father Storm,” the people said, with laughter

and chuckling, loose jests and some swearing, but they came up to him

with one accord until the space about, him, as far as to the roadway by

which carriages climbed the hill, was an unbroken pavement of rippling

faces.

“Good old Father!” and then laughter. “What abart the end of the world,

old gel?” and then references to “the petticoats” and more laughter.

“'Ere, I'll 'ave five bob each way, Resurrection,” and shrieks of wilder

laughter still.

The preacher stood for some moments silent and unshaken. Then the quiet

dignity of the man and the love of fair play in the crowd secured him a

hearing. He began amid general silence:

“I don't know if it is contrary to regulations to stand here to speak,

but I am risking that for the urgency of the hour and message. Men and

women, you are here under false pretences. You pretend to yourselves and

to each other that you have come out of a love of sport, but you have

not done so, and you know it. Sport is a plausible pleasure; to love

horses and take delight in their fleetness is a pardonable vanity, but

you are here to practise an unpardonable vice. You have come to

gamble, and your gambling is attended by every form of intemperance and

immorality. I am not afraid to tell you so, for God has laid upon me a

plain message, and I intend to do my duty. These race-courses are not

for horse-racing, but for reservoirs of avarice and drunkenness and

prostitution. Don't think”--he was looking straight into the painted

faces of the women in pink and yellow, who were trying to smile and

look amused--“don't think I am going to abuse the unhappy girls who are

forced by a corrupt civilization to live by their looks. They are my

friends, and half my own life is spent among them. I have known some

of them in whose hearts dwelt heavenly purity, and when I think of what

they have suffered from men I feel ashamed that I am a man. But, my

sisters, for you, too, I have an urgent message. It is full summer with

you now, as you sit here in your gay clothes on this bright day; but

the winter is coming for every one of you, when there will be no more

sunshine, no more luxury and pleasure and flattery, and when the miry

wallowers in troughs and stys, who are now taking the best years of your

lives from you----”

“Helloa there! Whoop! Tarara-ra-ra-rara!”

A four-in-hand coach was dashing headlong up the hill amid clouds of

dust, the rattling of wheels, the shouts of the driver and the blasts of

the horn, and the people who covered the roadway were surging forward to

make room for it.

“It's Gloria!” said everybody, looking up at the occupants of the coach

and recognising one of them.

The spell of the preacher was broken. He paused and turned his head and

saw Glory. She was sitting tall and bright and gay on the box-seat by

the side of Drake; the rays of the sun were on her and she was smiling

up into his face.

The preacher began again, then faltered, and then stopped. A bell at the

Grand Stand was ringing. “Numbers goin' up,” said everybody, and before

any one could be conscious of what was happening, John Storm was only a

cipher in the throng, and the crowd was melting away.

IV.

The great carnival completely restored Glory's spirits. She laughed

and cried out constantly and lived from minute to minute like a child.

Everybody recognised her and nearly everybody saluted her. Drake beamed

with pride and delight. He took her about the course, answered her

questions, punctuated her jests, and explained everything, leaving Lord

Robert to entertain his guests. Who were “those dwellers in tents”? They

were the Guards' Club, and the service was also represented by artillery

men, king's hussars, and a line regiment from Aldershot. This was called

“The Hill,” where jovial rascaldom, usually swarmed, looking out for

stray overcoats and the lids of luncheon dishes left unprotected on

carriages. Yes, the pickpocket, the card-sharper, the “lumberer,”

the confidence man, the blarneying beggar, and the fakir of every

description laid his snares on this holy spot. In fact, this is his

Sanctuary and he peddles under the eye of the police. “Holy Land?”

Ha, ha! “All the patriarchs out of the Bible here?” Oh, the vociferous

gentlemen with patriarchal names in velveteen coats under the banners

and canvas sign-boards--Moses, Aaron, and so forth? They were the

“bookies,” otherwise bookmakers, generally Jews and sometimes Welshers.

“Here, come along, some of you sportsmen! I ain't made the price of my

railway fare, s'elp me!” “It's a dead cert, gents.” “Can't afford to buy

thick 'uns at four quid apiece!” “Five to one on the field!” “I lay on

the field!”

A “thick un?” Oh, that was a sovereign, half a thick un half a

sovereign, twenty-five pounds a “pony,” five hundred a “monkey,” flash

notes were “stumers,” and a bookmaker who couldn't pay was “a Welsher.”

That? That was “the great Brockton,” gentleman and tipster. “Amusement

enough!” Yes, niggers, harpists, Christy Minstrels, strong men,

acrobats, agile clowns and girls on stilts, and all the ragamuffins from

“the Burrer,” bent on “making a bit.” African Jungle? A shooting gallery

with model lions and bears. Fine Art Exhibition? A picture of the

hanging of recent murderers. Boxing Ring? Yes, for women--they strip

to the waist and fight like fiends. Then look at the lady auctioneer

selling brass sovereigns a penny apiece.

“Buy one, gentlemen, and see what they're like, so as the 'bookies'

can't pawse 'em on ye unawares!”

“Food enough!” Yes, at Margett's, Patton's, Hatton's, and “The Three

Brooms,” as well as the barrows for stewed eels, hard-boiled eggs,

trotters, coker-nuts, winkles, oysters, cockles, and all the luxuries of

the New Cut. Why were they calling that dog “Cookshop”? Because he was

pretty sure to go there in the end.

By this time they had ploughed over some quarter of a mile of the

hillside, fighting their way among the carriages that stood six deep

along the rails and through a seething mass of ruffianism, in a stifling

atmosphere polluted by the smell of ale and the reeking breath of tipsy

people.

“Whoo! I feel like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego rolled into one,”

said Glory.

“Let us go into the Paddock,” said Drake, and they began to cross the

race track.

“But wasn't that somebody preaching as we galloped down the hill?”

“Was it? I didn't notice,” and they struggled through.

It was fresh and cool under the trees, and Glory thought it cheap even

at ten shillings a head to walk for ten minutes on green grass. Horses

waiting for their race were being walked about in clothes with their

names worked on the quarter sheets, and breeders, trainers, jockeys, and

clerks of the course mingled with gentlemen in silk hats and ladies in

smart costumes.

Drake's horse was a big bay colt, very thin, almost gaunt, and with

long, high-stepping legs. The trainer was waiting for a last word with

his owner. He was cool and confident. “Never better or fitter, Sir

Francis, and one of the grandest three-year-olds that ever looked

through a bridle. Improved wonderful since he got over his dental

troubles, and does justice to the contents of his manger. Capital field,

sir, but it's got to run up against summat smart to-day. Favourite, sir?

Pooh! A coach horse! Not stripping well--light in the flank and tucked

up. But this colt fills the eye as a first-class one should. Whatever

beats him will win, sir, take my word for that.”

And the jockey, standing by in his black-and-white-jacket, wagged

his head and said in a cheery whisper: “Have what ye like on 'im, Sir

Francis. Great horse, sir! Got a Derby in 'im or I'm a Slowcome.”

Drake laughed at their predictions, and Glory patted the creature while

it beat its white feet on the ground and the leather of its saddle

squeaked. The club stand from there? looked like a sea of foaming laces,

feathers, flowers, and sunshades. They turned to go to it, passing first

by the judge's box, whereof Drake explained the use, then through the

Jockey Club inclosure, which was full of peers, peeresses, judges,

members of Parliament, and other turfites, and finally through the

betting ring where some hundreds of betting men of the superior class

proclaimed their calling in loud voices and loud clothes and the gold

letters on their betting books. To one of these pencillers Drake said:

“What's the figure for Ellan Vannin?”

“Ten to one, market price, sir.”

“I'll take you in hundreds,” said Drake, and they struggled through the

throng.

Going up the stairs Glory said: “But wasn't the Archdeacon at your

office this morning? We saw him coming out of the square with Mr.

Golightly.”

“Oh, did you? How hot it is to-day!”

“Isn't it? I feel as if I should like to play Ariel in gossamer--But

wasn't it?”

“You needn't trouble about that, Glory. It's an old, story that

religious intolerance likes to throw the responsibility of its acts on

the civil government.”

“Then John Storm----”

“He is in no danger yet--none whatever.”

“Oh, how glorious!” They had reached the balcony, and Glory was

pretending that the change in her voice and manner came of delight at

the sudden view. She stood for a moment spellbound, and then leaned over

the rail and looked through the dazzling haze that was rising from the

vast crowd below. Not a foot of turf was to be seen for a mile around,

save where at the jockeys' gate a space was kept clear by the police. It

was a moving mass of humanity, and a low, indistinguishable murmur was

coming up from it such as the sea makes on the headlands above.

The cloud had died off Glory's face and her eyes were sparkling. “What a

wonderfully happy world it must be, after all!” she said.

Just then the standard was hoisted over the royal stand to indicate

that the Prince had arrived. Immediately afterward there was a silent

movement of hats on the lawns below the boxes, and then somebody down

there began to sing God save the Queen. The people on the Grand Stand

took up the chorus, then the people on the course joined in, then

the people on “The Hill,” until finally the whole multitude sang the

national hymn in a voice that was like the voice of an ocean.

Glory's eyes were now full of tears, she was struggling with a desire to

cry aloud, and Drake, who was watching her smallest action, stood before

her to screen her from the glances of gorgeously attired ladies who

were giggling and looking through lorgnettes. The fine flower of the

aristocracy was present in force, and the club stand was full of the

great ladies who took an interest in sport and even kept studs of their

own. Oriental potentates were among them in suits of blue and gold, and

the French language was being spoken on all sides.

Glory attracted attention and Drake's face beamed with delight. An

illustrious personage asked to be introduced to her, and said he had

seen her first performance and predicted her extraordinary success.

She did not flinch. There was a slight tremor, a scarcely perceptible

twitching of the lip, and then she bore her honours as if she had been

born to them. The Prince entertained a party to luncheon, and Drake and

Glory were invited to join it. All the smart people were there, and they

looked like a horticultural exhibition of cream colour and rose pink

and gray. Glory kept watching the great ones of the earth, and she found

them very amusing.

“Well, what do you think?” said Drake.

“I think most people at the Derby must have the wrong make-up on. That

gentleman, now--he ought to be done up as a stable-boy. And that lady in

mauve--she's a ballet girl really, only----”

“Hush, for Heaven's sake!” But Glory whispered, “Let's go round the

corner and laugh.”

She sat between Drake and a ponderous gentleman with a great beard like

a waterfall.

“What are the odds against the colt, Drake?”

Drake answered, and Glory recalled herself from her studies and said,

“Oh, yes, what did you say it was?”

“A prohibitive price--for you.” said Drake.

“Nonsense! I'm going to do a flutter on my own, you know, and plunge

against you.”

It was explained to her that only bookmakers bet against horses, but

the gentleman with the beard volunteered to reverse positions, and take

Glory's ten to one against Ellan Vannin.

“In what?”

“Oh--h'm--in thick 'uns, of course.”

“But what is the meaning of this running after strange gods?” said

Drake.

“Never mind, sir! Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, you

know----” and then the bell rang for the race of the day, and they

scurried back to the Stand. The numbers were going up and a line of

fifty policemen abreast were clearing the course. Some of the party had

come over from the coach, and Lord Robert was jotting down in a notebook

the particulars of betting commissions for his fair companions.

“And am I to be honoured with a commission from the Hurricane?” he

asked.

“Yes; what's the price for Ellan Vannin?”

“Come down to five to one, pretty lady.”

“Get me one to five that he's going to lose.”

“But what in the world are you doing, Glory?” said Drake. His eyes were

dancing with delight.

“Running a race with that old man in the box which can find a loser

first.”

At that moment the horses were sent out for the preliminary canter and

parade before the royal stand, and a tingling electrical atmosphere

seemed to come from somewhere and set every tongue wagging. It seemed as

if something unexpected was about to occur, and countless eyes went up

to the place where Drake stood with Glory by his side. He was outwardly

calm, but with a proud flush under his pallor; she was visibly excited,

and could not stand on the same spot for many seconds together. By this

time the noise made by the bookmakers in the inclosure below was like

that of ten thousand sea fowl on a reef of rock, and Glory was trying to

speak above the deafening clangour.

“Silver and gold have I none, but if I had--what's that?”

A white flag had fallen as signal for the start, there was a hollow roar

from the starting post, and people were shouting, “They're off!”

Then there was a sudden silence, a dead hush--below, above, around,

everywhere, and all eyes, all glasses, all lorgnettes were turned in the

direction of the runners.

The horses got well away and raced up the hill like cavalry charging

in line; then at the mile post the favourite drew to the front, and

the others went after him in an indistinguishable mass. But the descent

seemed not to his liking; he twisted a good deal, and the jockey was

seen sawing the reins and almost hanging over the horse's head. When

the racers swung round Tattenham Corner and came up like mice in the

distance, it was seen that another horse had taken advantage of an

opening and was overhauling the favourite with a tremendous rush. His

colours were white and black. It was Ellan Vannin. From that moment

Drake's horse never relinquished his advantage, but came down the

straight like a great bird with his wings ceasing to flap, passed the

Stand amid great excitement, and won handsomely by a length.

Then in the roar of delight that went up from the crowd Glory, with her

hand on Drake's shoulder, was seen to be crying, laughing, and cheering

at the same moment.

“But \_you've\_ lost,” said Drake.

“Oh, bother that!” she said, and when the jockey had slipped from his

saddle, and Drake had taken his horse into the weighing-room and the

“All right!” was shouted, she started the cheering again and said she

meant to make a dead heat of it with Tennyson's brook.

“But why did you bet against me?” said Drake.

“You silly boy,” she answered with a crow of happiness and gaiety,

“didn't the gipsy tell me I should lose money to-day? And how could I

bet on your horse unless you lost the race?”

Drake laughed merrily at her delicious duplicity and could hardly resist

an impulse to take her in his arms and kiss her. Meantime his friends

were slapping him on the back and people were crushing up to offer him

congratulations. He turned to take his horse into the Paddock, and Lord

Robert took Glory down after him. The trainer and jockey were there,

looking proud and happy, and Drake, with a pale and triumphant face, was

walking the great creature about as if reluctant to part with it. It

was breathing heavily, and sweat stood in drops on its throat, head, and

ears.

“Oh, you beauty! How I should love to ride you!” said Glory.

“But dare you?” said Drake.

“Dare I! Only give me the chance.”

“I will, by----I will, or it won't be my fault.”

Somebody brought champagne and Glory had to drink a bumper to “the best

horse of the century, bar none.” Then her glass was filled afresh and

she had to drink to the owner, “the best fellow on earth, bar none,” and

again she was compelled to drink “to the best bit of history ever made

at Epsom, bar none.” With that she was excused while the men drank at

Drake's proposal “to the loveliest, liveliest, leeriest little woman in

the world, God bless her!” and she hid her face in her hands and said

with a merry laugh:

“Tell me when it's over, boys, and I'll come again.”

After Drake had despatched telegrams and been bombarded by interviewers,

he led the way back to the coach on the Hill, and the company prepared

for their return. The sun had now gone, a thick veil of stagnant clouds

had gathered over it, the sky looked sulky, and Glory's head tad begun

to ache between the eyes. Rosa was to go home by train in order to

reach her office early, and Glory half wished to accompany her. But an

understudy was to play her part that night and she had no excuse. The

coach wormed its way through the close pack of vehicles at the top of

the Hill and began to follow the ebbing tide of humanity back to London.

“But what about my pair of gloves?”

“Oh, you're a hard man, reaping where you have not sowed and

gathering----”

“There, then, we're quits,” said Drake, leaning over from the box seat

and snatching a kiss of her. It was now clear that he had been drinking

a good deal.

V.

Before the race had been run, a solitary man with a dog at his heels had

crossed the Downs on his way back to the railway station. Jealousy and

rage possessed his heart between them, but he would not recognise these

passions; he believed his emotions to be horror and pity and shame.

John Storm had seen Glory on the race-course, in Drake's company, under

Drake's protection: he proud and triumphant, she bright and gay and

happy.

“O Lord, help me! Help me, O Lord!”

“And now, dragging along the road, in his mind's eye he saw her again

as the victim of this man, his plaything, his pastime to takeup or

leave--no better than any of the women about her, and where they were

going she would go also. Some day he would find her where he had found

others--outcast, deserted, forlorn, lost; down in the trough of life, a

thing of loathing and contempt!

“O Lord, help her! Help her, O Lord!”

There were few passengers by the train going back to London, nearly all

traffic at this hour being the other way, and there was no one else in

the compartment he occupied. He threw himself down in a corner, consumed

with indignation and a strange sense of dishonour. Again he saw her

bright eyes, her red lips--the glow of her whole radiant face and a

paroxysm of jealousy tore his heart to pieces. Glory was his. Though a

bottomless abyss was yawning between them, her soul belonged to him, and

a great upheaval of hatred for the man who possessed her body surged

up to his throat. Against all this his pride as well as his religion

rebelled. He crushed it down, and tried to turn his mind to another

current of ideas. How could he save her? If she should go down to

perdition, his remorse would be worse to bear than flames of fire and

brimstone. The more unworthy she was, the more reason he should strive

to rescue her soul from the pangs of eternal torment.

The rattling of the carriage broke in upon these visions, and he got up

and paced to and fro like a bear in a cage. And, like a bear with its

slow, strong grip, he seemed to be holding her in his wrath and saying:

“You shall not destroy yourself; you shall not, you shall not, for I, I,

I forbid it!” Then he sank back in his seat, exhausted by the conflict

which made his soul a battlefield of spiritual and sensual passions.

Every limb shook and quivered. He began to be afraid of himself, and he

felt an impulse to fly away somewhere. When he alighted at Victoria his

teeth were chattering, although the atmosphere was stifling and the sky

was now heavy with black and lowering clouds.

To avoid the eyes of the people who usually followed him in the streets,

he cut through a narrow thoroughfare and went back to Brown's Square by

way of the park. But the park was like a vast camp. Thousands of people

seemed to cover the grass as far as the eye could reach, and droves of

workmen, followed by their wives and children, were trudging to other

open spaces farther out. It was the panic terror. Afterward it was

calculated that fifty thousand persons from all parts of London had

quitted the doomed city that day to await the expected catastrophe under

the open sky.

The look of fierce passion had faded from his face by the time he

reached his church, but there another ordeal awaited him. Though it

still wanted an hour of the time of evening service a great crowd had

gathered in the square. He tried to escape observation, but the people

pressed upon him, some to shake his hand, others to touch his cassock,

and many to kneel at his feet and even to cover them with kisses. With a

sense of shame and hypocrisy he disengaged himself at length, and joined

Brother Andrew in the sacristy. The simple fellow was full of marvellous

stories. There had been wondrous manifestations of the workings of the

Holy Spirit during the day. The knocker-up, who was a lame man, had

shaken hands with the Father on his way home that morning, and now he

had thrown away his stick and was walking firmly and praising God.

The church was large and rectangular and plain, and looked a well-used

edifice, open every day and all day. The congregation was visibly

excited, but the service appeared to calm them. The ritual was full,

with procession and incense, but without vestments, and otherwise

monastic in its severity. John Storm preached. The epistle for the day

had been from First Corinthians, and he took his text from that source

also: “Deliver him up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that

the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

People said afterward that they had never heard anything like that

sermon. It was delivered in a voice that was low and tremulous with

emotion. The subject was love. Love was the first inheritance that God

had given to his creatures--the purest and highest, the sweetest and

best. But man had degraded and debased it, at the temptation of Satan

and the lust of the world. The expulsion of our first parents from Eden

was only the poetic figure of what had happened through all the ages. It

was happening now--and London, the modern Sodom, would as surely pay its

penalty as did the cities of the ancient East. No need to think of flood

or fire or tempest--of any given day or hour. The judgment that would

fall on England, like the plagues that fell on Egypt, would be of a kind

with the offence. She had wronged the spirit of love, and who knows but

God would punish her by taking out of the family of man the passion by

which she fell, lifting it away with all that pertained to it--good and

bad, spiritual and sensual, holy and corrupt?

The burning heat clouds of the day seemed to have descended into the

church, and in the gathering darkness the preacher, his face just

visible, with its eyes full of smouldering fire, drew an awful picture

of the world under the effects of such a curse. A place without

unselfishness, without self-sacrifice, without heroism, without

chivalry, without loyalty, without laughter, and without children!

Every man standing alone, isolated, self-centred, self-cursed, outlawed,

loveless, marriageless, going headlong to degeneracy and death! Such

might be God's punishment on this cruel and wicked city for its sensual

sins.

Then the preacher lost control of his imagination and swept his hearers

along with him as he fabricated horrible fancies. The people were

terror-stricken, and not until the last hymn was given out did they

recover the colour of their blanched faces. Then they sang as with

one voice, and after the benediction had been pronounced and they were

surging down the aisles in close packs, they started the hymn again.

Even when they had left the church they could not disperse. Out in the

square were the thousands who had not been able to get inside the doors,

and every moment the vast proportions of the crowd were swelled. The

ground was covered, the windows round about were thrown up and full of

faces, and people had clambered on to the railings of the church, and

even on to the roofs of the houses.

Somebody went to the sacristy and told the Father what was happening

outside. He was now like a man beside himself, and going out on to the

steps of the church where he could be seen by all, he lifted his hands

and pronounced a prayer in a sonorous and fervent voice:

“How long, O Lord, how long? From the bosom of God, where thou reposest,

look down on the world where thou didst walk as a man. Didst thou not

teach us to pray 'Thy kingdom come'? Didst thou not say thy kingdom was

near; that some who stood with thee should not taste of death till

they had seen it come with power; that when it came the poor should be

blessed, the hungry should be fed, the blind should see, the heavy-laden

should find rest, and the will of thy Father should be done on earth

even as it is done in heaven? But nigh upon two thousand years lave

gone, O Lord, and thy kingdom hath not come. In thy name now doth the

Pharisee give alms in the streets to the sound of a trumpet going before

him. In thy name now doth the Levite pass by on the other side when a

man has fallen among thieves. In thy name now doth the priest buy and

sell the glad tidings of the kingdom, giving for the gospel of God the

commandments of men, living in rich men's houses, faring sumptuously

every day, praying with his lips, 'Give us this day our daily bread,'

but saying to his; soul: 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many

years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' How long, O Lord, how

long?”

Hardly had John Storm stepped back when the heavy clouds broke into

mutterings of thunder. So low were the sounds at first that in the

general tumult they were scarcely noticed; but they came again and

again, louder and louder with every fresh reverberation, and then the

excitement of the people became intense and terrible. It was as if the

heavens themselves had spoken to give sign and assurance of the calamity

that had been foretold.

First a woman began to scream as if in the pains of labour. Then a young

girl cried out for mercy, and accused herself of countless and nameless

offences. Then the entire crowd seemed to burst into sobs and moans and

agonizing expressions of despair, mingled with shouts of wild laughter

and mad thanksgiving. “Pardon, pardon!” “O Jesus, save me!” “O Saviour

of sinners!” “O God, have mercy upon me!” “O my heart, my heart!” Some

threw themselves on the ground, stiff and motionless and insensible as

dead men. Others stood over the stricken people and prayed for their

relief from the power of Satan. Others fell into convulsions, and yet

others, with wild and staring eyes, rejoiced in their own salvation.

It was now almost dark and some of the people who had been out to the

Derby were returning home in their gigs and coster's carts, laughing,

singing, and nearly all of them drunk. There were wild encounters. A

young soldier (it was Charlie Wilkes) came upon Pincher the pawnbroker.

“Wot tcher, myte? Wot's yer amoosemint now?”

“Silence, you evil liver, you gambler, you son of Belial!”

“Stou thet now--d'ye want a kepple er black eyes or a pench on the

nowze?”

At nine o'clock the police of Westminster, being unable to disperse the

crowd, seat to Scotland Yard for the mounted constabulary.

VI.

Meantime the man who was the first cause of the tumult sat alone in his

cell-like chamber under the church, a bare room without carpet or rug,

and having no furniture except a block bed, a small washstand, two

chairs, a table, a prayer stool and crucifix, and a print of the Virgin

and Child. He heard the singing of the people outside, but it brought

him neither inspiration nor comfort. Nature could no longer withstand

the strain he had put upon it, and he was in deep dejection. It was one

of those moments of revulsion which comes to the strongest soul when at

the crown or near the crown of his expectations he asks himself, “What

is the good?” A flood of tender recollections was coming over him. He

was thinking of the past, the happy past, the past of love and innocence

which he had spent with Glory, of the little green isle in the Irish

Sea, and of all the sweetness of the days they had passed together

before she had fallen to the temptations of the world and he had become

the victim of his hard if lofty fate. Oh, why had he denied himself the

joys that came to all others? To what end had he given up the rewards of

life which the poorest and the weakest and the meanest of men may share?

Love, woman's love, why had he turned his back upon it? Why had he

sacrificed himself? O God, if, indeed, it were all in vain!

Brother Andrew put his head in at the half-open door. His brother, the

pawnbroker, was there and had something to say to the Father. Pincher's

face looked over Andrew's shoulder. The muscles of the man's eyes were

convulsed by religious mania.

“I've just sold my biziness, sir, and we 'aven't a roof to cover us

now!” he cried, in the tone of one who had done something heroic.

John asked him what was to become of his mother.

“Lor', sir, ain't it the beginning of the end? That's the gawspel, ain't

it? 'The foxes hev 'oles and the birds of the air hev nests----'”

And then close behind the man, interrupting him and pushing him aside,

there came another with fixed and staring eyes, crying: “Look 'ere,

Father! Look! Twenty years I 'obbled on a stick, and look at me now!

Praise the Lawd, I'm cured, en' no bloomin' errer! I'm a brand as was

plucked from the burnin' when my werry ends 'ad caught the flames!

Praise the Lawd, amen!”

John rebuked them and turned them out of the room, but he was almost

in as great a frenzy. When he had shut the door his mind went back to

thoughts of Glory. She, too, was hurrying to the doom that was coming

on all this wicked city. He had tried to save her from it, but he

had failed. What could he do now? He felt a desire to do something,

something else, something extraordinary.

Sitting on the end of the bed he began again to recall Glory's face as

he had seen it at the race-course. And now it came to him as a shock

after his visions of her early girlhood. He thought there was a certain

vulgarity in it which, he had not observed before--a slight coarsening

of its expression, an indescribable degeneracy even under the glow of

its developed beauty. With her full red lips and curving throat and

dancing eyes, she was smiling into the face of the man who was sitting

by her side. Her smile was a significant smile, and the bright and eager

look with which the man answered it was as full of meaning. He could

read their thoughts. What had happened? Were all barriers broken down?

Was everything understood between them?

This was the final madness, and he leaped to his feet in an outburst

of uncontrollable rage. All at once he shuddered with a feeling that

something terrible was brewing within him. He felt cold, a shiver was

running over his whole body. But the thought he had been in search of

had come to him of itself. It came first as a shock, and with a sense of

indescribable dread, but it had taken hold of him and hurried him away.

He had remembered his text: “Deliver him up to Satan for the destruction

of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

“Why not?” he thought; “it is in the Holy Book itself. There is the

authority of St. Paul for it. Clearly the early Christians countenanced

and practised such things.” But then came a spasm of physical pain.

That beautiful life, so full of love and loveliness, radiating joy and

sweetness and charm! The thing was impossible! It was monstrous! “Am I

going mad?” he asked himself.

And then he began to be sorry for himself as well as for Glory. How

could he live in the world without her? Although he had lost her,

although an impassable gulf divided them, although he had not seen her

for six months until today, yet it was something to know she was alive

and that he could go at night to the place where she was and look up and

think, “She is there.” “It is true, I am going mad,” he thought, and he

trembled again.

His mind oscillated among these conflicting ideas, until the more

hideous thought returned to him of Drake and the smile exchanged with

Glory. Then the blood rushed to his head, and strong emotions paralyzed

his reason. When he asked himself if it was right in England and in the

nineteenth century to contemplate a course which might have been proper

to Palestine and the first century, the answer came instantaneously that

it \_was\_ right. Glory was in peril. She was tottering on the verge

of hell. It would not be wrong, but a noble duty, to prevent the

possibility of such a hideous catastrophe. Better a life ended than a

life degraded and a soul destroyed.

On this the sophism worked. It was true that he would lose her; she

would be gone from him, she who was all his joy, his vision by day, his

dream by night. But could he be so selfish as to keep her in the flesh,

and thus expose her soul to eternal torment? And after all she would be

his in the other world, his forever, his alone. Nay, in this world also,

for being dead he would love her still. “But, O God, must \_I\_ do it?” he

asked himself at one moment, and at the next came his answer: “Yes, yes,

for I am God's minister.”

That sent him back to his text again. “Deliver him up to \_Satan\_----”

But there was a marginal reference to Timothy, and he turned it up

with a trembling hand. \_Satan\_ again, but the Revised Version gave “the

Lord's servant,” and thus the text should read, “Deliver him up to the

Lord's servant for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may

be saved in the day of the Lord.” This made him cry out. He drank it

in with inebriate delight. The thing was irrevocably decided. He was

justified, he was authorized, he was the instrument of a fixed purpose.

No other consideration could move him now.

By this time his heart and temples were beating violently, and he felt

as if he were being carried up into a burning cloud. Before his eyes

rose the vision of Isaiah, the meek lamb converted into an inexorable

avenger descending from the summit of Edom. It was right to shed blood

at the divine command--nay, it was necessary, it was inevitable. And as

God had commanded Abraham to take the life of Isaac, whom he loved, so

did God call on him, John Storm, to take the life of Glory that he might

save her from the risk of everlasting damnation!

There may have been intervals in which his sense of hearing left him,

for it was only now that he became conscious that somebody was calling

to him from the other side of the door.

“Is anybody there?” he asked, and a voice replied:

“Dear heart, yes, this five minutes and better, but I didna dare come

in, thinking surely there was somebody talking with you. Is there no

somebody here then? No?”

It was Mrs. Callender, who was carrying a small glad-stone bag.

“Oh, it's you, is it?”

“Aye, it's myself, and sorry I am to be bringing bad news to you.”

“What is it?” he asked, but his tone betrayed complete indifference.

She closed the door and answered in a whisper: “A warrant! I much

misdoubt but there's one made out for you.”

“Is that all?”

“Bless me, what does the man want? But come, laddie, come; you must tak'

yoursel' off to some spot till the storm blows over.”

“I have work to do, auntie.”

“Work! You've worked too much already--that's half the botherment.”

“God's work, auntie, and it must be done.”

“Then God will do it himself, without asking the life of a good man, or

he's no just what I've been takin' him for. But see,” opening the bag

and whispering again, “your auld coat and hat! I found them in your puir

auld room that you'll no come back to. You've been looking like another

body so long that naebody will ken you when you're like yoursel' again.

Come, now, off with these lang, ugly things----”

“I can not go, auntie.”

“Can not?”

“I will not. While God commands me I will do my duty.”

“Eh, but men are kittle cattle! I've often called you my ain son, but

if I were your ain mother I ken fine what I'd do with you--I'd just

slap you and mak' you. I'll leave the clothes, anyway. Maybe you'll be

thinking better of it when I'm gone. Good-night to you. Your puir head's

that hot and moidered---But what's wrang with you, John, man? What's

come over ye anyway?”

He seemed to be hardly conscious of her presence, and after standing a

moment at the door, looking back at him with eyes of love and pity, she

left the room.

He had been asking himself for the first time how he was to carry out

his design. Sitting on the end of the bed with his head propped on his

hand he felt as if he were in the hold of a great ship, listening to the

plash and roar of the stormy sea outside. The excitement of the populace

was now ungovernable and the air was filled with groans and cries. He

would have to pass through the people, and they would see him and detain

him, or perhaps follow him. His impatience was now feverish. The thing

he had to do must be done to-night, it must be done immediately. But it

was necessary in the first place to creep out unseen. How was he to do

it?

When he came to himself he had a vague sense of some one wishing him

good-night. “Oh, good-night, good-night!” he cried with an apologetic

gesture. But he was alone in the room, and on turning about he saw

the bag on the floor, and remembered everything. Then a strange thing

happened. Two conflicting emotions took hold of him at once--the first

an enthusiastic, religious ecstasy, the other a low, criminal cunning.

Everything was intended. He was only the instrument of a fixed purpose.

These clothes were proof of it. They came to his hand at the very moment

when they were wanted, when nothing else would have helped him. And Mrs.

Callender had been the blind agent in a higher hand to carry out the

divine commands. Fly away and hide himself? God did not intend it. A

warrant? No matter if it sent him like Cranmer to the stake. But

this was a different thing entirely, this was God's will and purpose,

this----

Yet even while thinking so he laughed an evil laugh, tore the clothes

out of the bag with trembling hands, and made ready to put them on. He

had removed his cassock when some one opened the door.

“Who's there?” he cried in a husky growl.

“Only me,” said a timid voice, and Brother Andrew entered, looking pale

and frightened.

“Oh, you! Come in; close the door; I've something to say to you. Listen!

I'm going out, and I don't know when I shall be back. Where's the dog?”

“In the passage, brother.”

“Chain him up at the back, lest he should get out and follow me. Put

this cassock away, and if anybody asks for me say you don't know where

I've gone--you understand?”

“Yes; but are you well, Brother Storm? You look as if you had just been

running.”

There was a hand-glass on the washstand, and John snatched it up and

glanced into it and put it down again instantly. His nostrils were

quivering, his eyes were ablaze, and the expression of his face was

shocking.

“What are they doing outside? See if I can get away without being

recognised,” and Brother Andrew went out to look.

The passage from the chambers under the church was into a dark and

narrow street at the back, but even there a group of people had

gathered, attracted by the lights in the windows. Their voices could

be heard through the door which Brother Andrew had left ajar, and John

stood behind it and listened. They were talking of himself--praising

him, blessing him, telling stories of his holy life and gentleness.

Brother Andrew reported that most of the people were at the front, and

they were frantic with religious excitement. Women were crushing up to

the rail which the Father had leaned his head upon for a moment after

he had finished his prayer, in order to press their handkerchiefs and

shawls on it.

“But nobody would know you now, Brother Storm--even your face is

different.”

John laughed again, but he turned off the lights, thinking to drive away

the few who were still lingering in the back street. The ruse succeeded.

Then the man of God went out on his high errand, crept out, stole out,

sneaked out, precisely as if he had been a criminal on his way to commit

a crime.

He followed the lanes and narrow streets and alleys behind the Abbey,

past the “Bell,” the “Boar's Head,” and the “Queen's Arms”--taverns that

have borne the same names since the days when Westminster was Sanctuary.

People home from the races were going into them with their red ties

awry, with sprigs of lilac in their buttonholes; and oak leaves in

their hats. The air was full of drunken singing, sounds of quarrelling,

shameful words and curses. There were some mutterings of thunder and

occasional flashes of lightning, and over all there was the deep hum of

the crowd in the church square.

Crossing the bottom of Parliament Street he was almost run down by a

squadron of mounted police who were trotting into Broad Sanctuary. To

escape observation he turned on to the Embankment and walked under

the walls of the gardens of Whitehall, past the back of Charing Cross

station to the street going up from the Temple.

The gate of Clement's Inn was closed, and the porter had to come out of

his lodge to open it.

“The Garden House!”

“Garden House, sir? Inner court left-hand corner.”

John passed through. “That will be remembered afterward,” he thought.

“But no matter--it will all be over then.”

And coming out of the close streets, with their clatter of traffic, into

the cool gardens, with their odour of moistened grass, the dull glow in

the sky, and the glimpse of the stars through the tree-tops, his mind

went back by a sudden bound to another night, when he had walked over

the same spot with Glory. At that there came a spasm of tenderness, and

his throat thickened. He could almost see her, and feel her by his side,

with her fragrant freshness and buoyant step. “O God! must I do it, must

I, must I?” he thought again.

But another memory of that night came back to him; he heard Drake's

voice as it floated over the quiet place. Then the same upheaval of

hatred which he had felt before he felt again. The man was the girl's

ruin; he had tempted her by love of dress, of fame, of the world's

vanities and follies of every sort. This made him think for the first

time of how he might find her. He might find her with \_him\_. They would

come back from the Derby together. He would bring her home, and they

would sup in company. The house would be lit up; the windows thrown

open; they would be playing and singing and laughing, and the sounds of

their merriment would come down to him into the darkness below.

All the better, all the better! He would do it before the man's face.

And when it was done, when all was over, when she lay there--lay

there--there--he would turn on the man and say: “Look at her, the

sweetest girl that ever breathed the breath of life, the dearest, truest

woman in all the world! You have done that--you--you--you--and God damn

you!”

His tortured heart was afire, and his brain was reeling. Before he knew

where he was he had passed from the outer court into the inner one.

“Here it is--this is the house,” he thought. But it was all dark. Just a

few lights burning, but they had been carefully turned down. The windows

were closed, the blinds were drawn, and there was not a sound anywhere!

He stood some minutes trying to think, and during that time the mood of

frenzy left him and the low cunning came back. Then he rang the bell.

There was no answer, so he rang again. After a while he heard a footstep

that seemed to come up from below. Still the door was not opened, and he

rang a third time.

“Who's there?” said a voice within.

“It is I--open the door,” he answered.

“Who are you?” said the voice, and he replied impatiently:

“Come, come, Liza, open, and see.”

Then the catch lock was shot back. At the next moment he was in the

hall, shutting the door behind him, and Liza was looking up into his

face with eyes of mingled fear and relief.

“Lor', sir, whyever didn't you say it was you?”

“Where's your mistress?”

“Gone to the office, and won't be back till morning. And Miss Gloria

isn't home from the races yet.”

“I must see her to-night--I'll wait upstairs.”

“You must excuse me, sir--Farver, I mean--but I wouldn't a-known your

voice, it seemed so different. And me that sleepy too, being on the go

since six in the mornin'----”

“Go to bed, Liza. You sleep in the kitchen, don't you?”

“Yes, sir, thank you, I think I will, too. Miss Gloria can let herself

in, anyway, same as comin' from the theatre. But can I git ye anythink?

No? Well, you know your wye up, sir, down't ye?”

“Yes, yes; good-night, Liza!”

“Good-night, Farver!”

He had set his foot on the stair to go up to the drawing-room when it

suddenly occurred to him that though he was the minister of God he

was using the weapons of the devil. No matter! If he had been about to

commit a crime it would have been different. But this was no crime, and

he was no criminal. He was the instrument of God's mercy to the woman he

loved. \_He was going to slay her body that he might save her soul!\_

VII.

The journey home from the Derby had been a long one, but Glory had

enjoyed it. When she had settled down to the physical discomfort of the

blinding and choking dust, the humours of the road became amusing. This

endless procession of good-humoured ruffianism sweeping through the most

sacred retreats of Nature, this inroad of every order of the Stygian

\_demi-monde\_ on to the slopes of Olympus, was intensely interesting. Men

and women merry with drink, all laughing, shouting, and singing; some

in fine clothes and lounging in carriages, others in striped jerseys

and yellow cotton dresses, huddled up on donkey barrows; some smoking

cigarettes and cigars and drinking champagne, others smoking clay pipes

with the bowls downward, and flourishing bottles of ale; some holding

rhubarb leaves over their heads for umbrellas, and pelting the police

with \_confetti\_; others wearing executioners' masks, false mustaches,

and red-tipped noses, and blowing bleating notes out of penny

trumpets--but all one family, one company, one class.

There were ghastly scenes as well as humorous ones--an old horse, killed

by the day's work and thrown into the ditch by the roadside, axletrees

broken by the heavy loads and people thrown out of their carts and cut,

boy tramps dragging along like worn-out old men, and a Welsher with his

clothes torn to ribbons, stealing across the fields to escape a yelping

and infuriated crowd.

But the atmosphere was full of gaiety, and Glory laughed at nearly

everything. Lord Robert, with his arm about Betty's waist, was chaffing

a coster who had a drunken woman on his back seat. “Got a passenger,

driver?” “Yuss, sir, and I'm agoin' 'ome to my wife to-night, and thet's

more nor you dare do.” A young fellow in pearl buttons was tramping

along with a young girl in a tremendous hat. He snatched her hat off,

she snatched off his; he kissed her, she smacked his face; he put her

hat on his own head, she put on his hat; and then they linked arms and

sang a verse of the Old Dutch.

Glory reproduced a part of this love-passage in pantomime, and Drake

screamed with laughter.

It was seven o'clock before they reached the outskirts of London. By

that time a hamper on the coach had been emptied and the bottles thrown

out; the procession had drawn up at a dozen villages on the way; the

perspiring tipsters, with whom “things hadn't panned out well,” had

forgotten their disappointments and “didn't care a tinker's! cuss”;

every woman in a barrow had her head-gear in confusion, and she was

singing in a drunken wail. Nevertheless Drake, who was laughing and

talking constantly, said it was the quietest Derby night he had ever

seen, and he couldn't tell what things were coming to.

“Must be this religious mania, don't you know,” said lord Robert,

pointing to a new and very different scene which they had just then come

upon.

It was an open space covered with people, who had lit fires as if

intending to camp out all night, and were now gathered in many groups,

singing hymns and praying. The drunken wails from the procession stopped

for a moment, and there was nothing heard but the whirring wheels and

the mournful notes of the singers. Then “Father Storm!” rose like the

cry of a cormorant from a thousand throats at once. When the laughter

that greeted the name had subsided, Betty said:

“'Pon my honour, though, that man must be off his dot,” and the lady in

blue went into convulsions of hysterical giggling. Drake looked uneasy,

and Lord Robert said, “Who cares what an Elephant says?” But Glory took

no notice now, save that for a moment the smile died off her face.

It had been agreed, when they cracked the head off the last bottle, that

the company should dine together at the Cafè Royal or Romano's, so they

drove first to Drake's chambers to brush the dust off and to wash and

rest. Glory was the first to be ready, and while waiting for the others

she sat at the organ in the sitting-room and played something. It was

the hymn they had heard in the suburbs. At this there was laughter from

the other side of the wall, and Drake, who seemed unable, to lose sight

of her, came to the door of his room in his shirt sleeves. To cover up

her confusion she sang a “coon” song. The company cheered her, and

she sang another, and yet another. Finally she began My Mammie, but

floundered, broke down, and cried.

“Rehearsal, ten in the morning,” said Betty.

Then everybody laughed, and while Drake busied himself putting Glory's

cloak on her shoulders, he whispered: “What's to do, dear? A bit off

colour to-night, eh?”

“Be a good boy and leave me alone,” she answered, and then she laughed

also.

They were on the point of setting out when somebody said, “But it's

late for dinner now--why not supper at the Corinthian Club?” At that the

other ladies cried “Yes” with one voice. There was a dash of daring and

doubtful propriety in the proposal.

“But are you game for it?” said Drake, looking at Glory.

“Why not?” she replied, with a merry smile, whereupon he cried “All

right,” and a look came into his eyes which she had never seen there

before.

The Corinthian Club was in St. James's Square, a few doors from the

residence of the Bishop of London. It was now dark, and as they passed

through Jermyn Street a line of poor children stood by the poulterer's

shop at the corner waiting for the scraps that are thrown away at

closing time. York Street was choked with hansoms, but they reached

the door at last. There were the sounds of music and dancing within.

Officials in uniform stood in a hall examining the tickets of membership

and taking the names of guests. The ladies removed their cloaks, the

men hung up their coats and hats, a large door was thrown open, and they

looked into the ballroom. The room was full of people as faultlessly

dressed as at a house in Grosvenor Square. But the women were all young

and pretty, and the men had no surnames. A long line of gilded youths in

dress clothes occupied the middle of the floor. Each held by the waist

the young man before him as if he were going to play leap-frog. “Hello

there!” shouted one of them, and the band struck up. Then the whole body

kicked out right and left, while all sang a chorus, consisting chiefly

of “Tra-la-la-la-la-la!” One of them was a lord, another a young man

who had lately come into a fortune, another a light comedian, another

belonged to a big firm on the Stock Exchange, another was a mystery, and

another was one of “the boys” and lived by fleecing all the rest. They

were executing a dance from the latest burlesque. “Hello, there!” the

conductor shouted again, and the band stopped.

Lord Robert led the way upstairs. Pretty women in light pinks and blues

sat in every corner of the staircase. There was a balcony from which you

could look down on the dancers as from the gallery of a playhouse. Also

there was an American bar where women smoked cigarettes. Lord Robert

ordered supper, and when the meal was announced they went into the

supper-room.

“Hello there!” greeted them as they entered. At little tables lit up by

pink candles sat small groups of shirt fronts and butterfly ties

with fair heads and pretty frocks. Waiters were coming and going with

champagne and silver dishes; there was a clatter of knives and forks,

and a jabber of voices and laughter. And all the time there came the

sounds of the band, with the “Tra-la-la” from the ballroom below.

Glory sat by Drake. She realized that she had lowered herself in his

eyes by coming there. He was drinking a good deal and paying her endless

compliments. From time to time the tables about them were vacated

and filled again by similar shirt fronts and fair heads. People were

arriving from the Derby, and the talk was of the day's racing. Some of

the new arrivals saluted Drake, and many of them looked at Glory. “A

rippin' good race, old chappie. Didn't suit my book exactly, but the

bookies will have smiling faces at Tattersall's on Monday.”

A man with a big beard at the next table pulled down his white

waistcoat, lifted his glass, and said, “To Gloria!” It was her

acquaintance of the race-course.

“Who is Blue Beard?” she asked in a whisper.

“They call him the Faro King,” said Drake. “Made all his money by

gambling in Paris, and now he is a squire with a living in his gift.”

Then over the laughter and voices, the band and the singing, with an

awful suddenness there came a crash of thunder. The band and the comic

song stopped, and there was a hush for a moment. Then Lord Robert said:

“Wonder if this is the dreadful storm that is to overwhelm the nation,

don't you know!”

That fell on the house of frivolity like a second thunderbolt, and

people began to look up with blanched faces.

“Well, it isn't the first time the \_storm\_ has howled; it's been howling

all along,” said Lord Robert, but nobody laughed.

Presently the company recovered itself, the bands and the singing were

heard again, louder and wilder than before, the men shouted for more

champagne, and nicknamed every waiter “Father Storm.”

Glory was ashamed. With her head on her hand she was looking at the

people around when the “Faro King,” who had been making eyes at her,

leaned over her shoulder and said in a confidential whisper, “And what

is Gloria looking for?”

“I am looking for \_a man\_,” she answered. And as the big beard turned

away with “Oh, confound it!” she became aware that Drake and Lord Robert

were at high words from opposite sides of the table.

“No, I tell you no, no, \_no\_!” said Drake. “Call him a weakling and a

fool and an ass, if you will, but does that explain everything? This is

one of the men with the breath of God in him, and you can't judge of him

by ordinary standards.”

“Should think not, indeed, dear chap,” said Lord Robert, “Common sense

laughs at the creature.”

“So much the worse for common sense. When it judges of these isolated

beings by the standards of the common herd then common sense is always

the greatest nonsense.”

“Oho! oho!” came in several voices, but Drake paid no attention.

“Jesus Christ himself was mocked at and ridiculed by the common sense of

his time, by his own people, and even his own family, and his family and

people and time have been gibbeted by all the centuries that have come

after them. And so it has been with every ardent soul since who has

taken up his parable and introduced into the world a new spirit. The

world has laughed at him and spat upon him, and, only for its fear

of the sublime banner he has borne, it would have shut him up in a

mad-house.”

They were strange words in a strange place. Everybody listened.

“But these sombre giants are the leaders of the world for all that, and

one hour of their Divine madness is worth more to humanity than a cycle

of our sanity. And yet we deny them friendship and love, and do our best

to put them out of the pale of the human family! We have invented a new

name for them too--degenerates--pygmies and pigs as we are, who ought

to go down on our knees to them with our faces buried in the dirt!

Gentlemen,” he cried, filling his glass and rising to his feet, “I give

you a toast--the health of Father Storm!”

Glory had sat trembling all over, breathing hard, blushing, and

wide-eyed until he had done. Then she leaped up to where he stood beside

her, threw her arms about his neck, and kissed him.

“And now you ring down quick, my dear,” said Betty, and everybody

laughed a little.

Drake was laughing with the rest, and Glory, who had dropped back to her

seat in confused embarrassment, was trying to laugh too.

“Another bottle of fizz anyway,” cried Drake. He had mistaken the

meaning of Glory's kiss, and was utterly intoxicated by it. She could

have cried with shame and rage, seeing he thought such conduct came

naturally to her and perhaps imagined it wasn't the first time she had

done as much. But to carry off the situation she laughed a good deal

with him, and when the wine came they jingled glasses.

“I'm going to see you home to-night,” he whispered, smiling slyly and

looking her full in the eyes. She shook her head, but that only provoked

him to fresh effort.

“I must, I will--you \_shall\_ allow me,” and he began to play with her

hand and ruffle up the lace that covered her round arm.

Just then his man Benson, looking hot and excited, came up to him with a

message. Glory overheard something about “the office,” “the Secretary,”

and “Scotland Yard.” Then Drake turned to her with a smile, over a look

of vexation, and said: “I'm sorry, dear--very--I must go away for a

while. Will you stay here until I return, or----”

“Take me out and put me in a cab,” said Glory. Their getting up

attracted attention, and Lord Robert said:

“Is it, perhaps, something about that----”

“It's nothing,” said Drake, and they left the room.

The band in the ballroom was still playing the dance out of the

burlesque, and half a hundred voices were shouting “Tra-la-la-la” as

Glory stepped into a hansom.

“I'll follow on, though,” whispered Drake with a merry smile.

“We shall all be in bed, and the house locked up---- How magnificent you

were to-night!”

“I couldn't see the man trodden on when he was down---- But how lovely

you've looked to-day, Glory! I'll get in to-night if I have to ring up

Liza or break down the door for it!”

As the cab crossed Trafalgar Square it had to draw up for a procession

of people coming up Parliament Street singing hymns. Another and more

disorderly procession of people, decorated with oak leaves and hawthorns

and singing a music-hall song, came up and collided with it. A line of

police broke up both processions; and the hansom passed through.

VIII.

On entering the drawing-room John Storm was seized with a weird feeling

of dread. The soft air seemed to be filled with Glory's presence and her

very breath to live in it. On the side-table a lamp was burning under a

warm red shade. A heap of petty vanities lay about--articles of silver,

little trinkets, fans, feathers, and flowers. His footsteps on the soft

carpet made no noise. It was all so unlike the place he had come from,

his own bare chamber under the church!

He could have fancied that Glory had that moment left the room. The door

of a little ebony cabinet stood half open and he could see inside. Its

lower shelves were full of shoes and little dainty slippers, some of

them of leather, some of satin, some black, some red, some white. They

touched him with an indescribable tenderness and he turned his eyes

away. Under the lamp lay a pair of white gloves. One of them was flat

and had not been worn, but the other was filled out with the impression

of a little hand. He took it up and laid it across his own big palm, and

another wave of tenderness broke over him.

On the mantelpiece there were many photographs. Most of them were of

Glory and some were very beautiful, with their gleaming and glistening

eyes and their curling and waving hair. One looked even voluptuous with

its parted lips and smiling mouth; but another was different--it was

so sweet, so gay, so artless. He thought it must belong to an earlier

period, for the dress was such as she used to wear in the days when he

knew her first, a simple jersey and a sailor's stocking cap. Ah, those

days that were gone, with their innocence and joy! Glory! His bright,

his beautiful Glory!

His emotion was depriving him of the free use of his faculties, and he

began to ask himself why he was waiting there. At the next instant came

the thought of the awful thing he had come to do and it seemed monstrous

and impossible. “I'll go away,” he told himself, and he turned his face

toward the door.

On a what-not at the door side of the room another photograph stood in

a glass stand. His back had been to it, and the soft light of the lamp

left a great part of the room in obscurity, but he saw it now, and

something bitter that lay hidden at the bottom of his heart rose to his

throat. It was a portrait of Drake, and at the sight of it he laughed

savagely and sat down.

How long he sat he never knew. To the soul in torment there is no such

thing as time; an hour is as much as, eternity and eternity is no more

than an hour. His head was buried in his arms on the table and he was a

prey to anguish and doubt. At one time he told himself that God did

not send men to commit murder; at the next that this was not murder

but sacrifice. Then a mocking voice in his ears seemed to say, “But

the world will call it murder and the law will punish you.” To that he

answered in his heart: “When I leave this house I will deliver myself

up. I will go to the nearest police court and say 'Take me, I have

done my duty in the eye of God, but committed a crime in the eye of my

country.'” And when the voice replied, “That will only lead to your own

death also,” he thought, “Death is a gain to those who die for their

cause, and my death will be a protest against the degradation of women,

a witness against the men who make them the creatures of their pleasure,

their playthings, their victims, and their slaves.” Thinking so, he

found a strange thrill in the idea that all the world would hear of what

he had done. “But I will say a mass for her soul in the morning,” he

told himself, and a chill came over him and his heart grew cold as a

stone.

Then he lifted his head and listened. The room was quiet, there was

not a sound in the gardens of the Inn, and, through a window which was

partly open, he could hear the monotonous murmur of the streets outside.

A great silence seemed to have fallen on London--a silence more awful

than all the noise and confused clamour of the evening. “It must be

late,” he thought; “it must be the middle of the night.” Then the

thought came to him that perhaps, Glory would not come home that night

at all, and in a sudden outburst of pent-up feeling his heart cried,

“Thank God! Thank God!”

He had said it aloud and the sound of his voice in the silent

room--awakened all his faculties. Suddenly he was aware of other sounds

outside. There was a rumble of wheels and the rattle of a hansom. The

hansom came nearer and nearer. It stopped in the outside courtyard.

There was the noise of a curb-chain as if the horse were shaking its

head. The doors of the hansom opened with a creak and banged back on

their spring. A voice, a woman's voice, said “Good-night!” and another

voice, a man's voice, answered, “Good-night and thank you, miss!” Then

the cab wheels turned and went off. All his senses seemed to have

gone into his ears, and in the silence of that quiet place he heard

everything. He rose to his feet and stood waiting.

After a moment there was the sound of a key in the lock of the door

below; the rustle of a woman's dress coming up the stairs, an odour of

perfume in the air, an atmosphere of freshness and health, and then the

door of the room which had been ajar was swung open and there on the

threshold with her languid and tired but graceful movements was she

herself, Glory. Then his head turned giddy and he could neither hear nor

see.

When Glory saw him standing by the lamp, with his deadly pale face, she

stood a moment in speechless astonishment, and passed her hand across

her eyes as if to wipe out a vision. After that she clutched at a chair

and made a faint cry.

“Oh, is it you?” she said in a voice which she strove to control. “How

you frightened me! Whoever would have thought of seeing you here!”

He was trying to answer, but his tongue would not obey him, and his

silence alarmed her.

“I suppose Liza let you in--where \_is\_ Liza?”

“Gone to bed,” he said in a thick voice.

“And Rosa--have you seen Rosa?”

“No.”

“Of course not! How could you? She must be at the office, and won't be

back for hours. So you see we are quite alone!”

She did not know why she said that, and, in spite of the voice which

she tried to render cheerful, her lip trembled. Then she laughed, though

there was nothing to laugh at, and down at the bottom of her heart she

was afraid. But she began moving about, trying to make herself easy and

pretending not to be alarmed.

“Well, won't you help me off with my cloak? No? Then I must do it for

myself I suppose.”

Throwing off her outer things, she walked across the room and sat down

on the sofa near to where he stood.

“How tired I am! It's been such a day! Once is enough for that sort of

thing, though! Now where do you think I've been?”

“I know where you've been, Glory--I saw you there.”

“You? Really? Then perhaps it \_was\_ you who----Was it you in the

hollow?”

“Yes.”

He had moved to avoid contact with her, but now, standing by the

mantelpiece looking into her face, he could not help recognising in the

fashionable woman at his feet the features of the girl once so dear to

him, the brilliant eyes, the long lashes, the twitching of the eyelids,

and the restless movement of the mouth. Then the wave of tenderness

came sweeping over him again and he felt as if the ground were slipping

beneath his feet.

“Will you say your prayers to-night. Glory?” he said,

“Why not?” she answered, trying to laugh.

“Then why not say them now, my child?”

“But why?”

He had made her tremble all over, but she got up, walked straight across

to him, looked intently into his face for a moment, and then said: “What

is the matter? Why are you so pale? You are not well, John!”

“No, I'm not well either.” he answered.

“John, John, what does it all mean? What are you thinking of? Why have

you come here to-night?”

“To save your soul, my child. It is in great, great peril.”

At first she took this for the common, everyday language of the devotee,

but another look into his face banished that interpretation, and her

fear rose to terror. Nevertheless she talked lightly, hardly knowing

what she said. “Am I, then, so very wicked? Surely Heaven doesn't want

me yet, John. Some day I trust--I hope----”

“To-night, to-night--\_now!\_”

Then her cheeks turned pale and her lips became white and bloodless.

She had returned to the sofa, and half rose from it, then sat back,

stretching out one hand as if to ward off a blow, but still keeping her

eyes riveted on his face. Once she looked round to the door and tried to

cry out, but her voice would not answer her.

This speechless fright lasted only a moment. Then she was herself again,

and looked fearlessly up at him. She had the full use of her intellect,

and her quick instinct went to the root of things. “This is the madness

of jealousy,” she thought. “There is only one way to deal with it. If I

cry out--if I show that I am afraid--if I irritate him, it will soon,

be over.” She told herself in a moment that she must try gentleness,

tenderness, reason, affection, love.

Trembling from head to foot, she stepped up to him again, and began

softly and sweetly trying to explain herself. “John, dear John, if you

see me with certain people and in certain places you must not think from

that----”

But he broke in upon her with a torrent of words. “I can't think of it

at all, Glory. When I look ahead I see nothing but shame and misery and

degradation for you in the future. That man is destroying you body and

soul. He is leading you on to the devil and hell and damnation, and I

can not stand by and see it done!”

“Believe me, John, you are mistaken, quite mistaken.” But, with a look

of sombre fury, he cried, “Can you deny it?”

“I can protect and care for myself, John.”

“With that man's words in your ears, still can you deny it?”

Suddenly she remembered Drake's last whisper as she got into the hansom,

and she covered her face with her hands.

“You can't! It is the truth! The man is following you to ruin you, and

you know it. You've known it from the first, therefore you deserve all

that can ever come to you. Do you know what you are guilty of? You are

guilty of soul-suicide. What is the suicide of the body to the suicide

of the soul? What is the crime of the poor broken creature who only

chooses death and the grave before starvation or shame, compared to the

sin of the wretched woman who murders her soul for sake of the lusts

and vanities of the world? The law of man may punish, the one, but the

vengeance of God is waiting for the other.”

She was crying behind her hands, and, in spite of the fury into which

he had lashed himself, a great pity took hold of him. He felt as if

everything were slipping away from him, and he was trying to stand on

an avalanche. But he told himself that he would not waver, that he would

hold to his purpose, that he would stand firm as a rock. Heaving a deep

sigh, he walked to and fro across the room.

“O Glory, Glory! Can't you understand what it is to me to be the

messenger of God's judgment?”

She gasped for breath, and what had been a vague surmise became a

certainty--thinking he was God's avenger, yet with nothing but a poor

spasm of jealousy in his heart, he had come with a fearful purpose to

perform.

“I did what I could in other ways and it was all in vain. Time after

time I tried to save you from these dangers, but you would not listen. I

was ready for any change, any sacrifice. Once I would have given up all

the world for you, Glory--you know that quite well--friends, kinsmen,

country, everything, even my work and my duty, and, but for the grace of

God, God himself!”

But his tenderness broke again into a headlong torrent of reproach.

“You failed me, didn't you? At the last moment, too--the very last! Not

content with the suicide of your own soul, you must attempt to murder

the soul of another. Do you know what that is? That is the unpardonable

sin! You are crying, aren't you? Why are you crying?” But even while he

said this something told him that all he was waiting for was that her

beautiful eyes should be raised and their splendid light flash upon him

again.

“But that is all over now. It was a blunder, and the breach between us

is irreparable. I am better as I am--far, far better. Without friends or

kin or country, consecrated for life, cut off from the world, separate,

alone!”

She knew that her moment had come, and that she must vanquish this man

and turn him from his purpose, whatever it was, by the only weapon a

woman could use--his love of her. “I do not deny that you have a right

to be angry with me,” she said, “but don't think that I have not given

up something too. At the time you speak of, when I chose this life and

refused to go with you to the South Seas, I sacrificed a good deal--I

sacrificed love. Do you think I didn't realize what that meant? That

whatever the pleasure and delight my art might bring me, and the

flattery, and the fame, and the applause, there were joys I was never

to know--the happiness that every poor woman may feel, though she isn't

clever at all, and the world knows nothing about her--the happiness of

being a wife and a mother, and of holding her place in life, however

humble she is and simple and unknown, and of linking the generations

each to each. And, though the world has been so good to me, do you think

I have ever ceased to regret that? Do you think I don't remember it

sometimes when the house rises at me, or when I am coming home, or

perhaps when I awake in the middle of the night? And notwithstanding all

this success with which the world has crowned me, do you think I don't

hunger sometimes for what success can never buy--the love of a good man

who would love me with all his soul and his strength and everything that

is his?”

Out of a dry and husky throat John Storm answered: “I would rather die a

thousand, thousand deaths than touch a hair of your head, Glory....

But God's will is his will!” he added, quivering and trembling. The

compulsion of a great passion was drawing him, but he struggled hard

against it. “And then this success--you cling to it nevertheless!” he

cried, with a forced laugh.

“Yes, I cling to it,” she said, wiping away the tears that had begun to

fall. “I can not give it up, I can not, I can not!”

“Then what is the worth of your repentance?”

“It is not repentance--it is what you said it was--in this room--long

ago.... We are of different natures, John--that is the real trouble

between us, now and always has been. But whether we like it or not, our

lives are wrapped up together for all that. We can't do without each

other. God makes men and women like that sometimes.”

There was a piteous smile on his face. “I never doubted your feeling for

me, Glory. No, not even when you hurt me most.”

“And if God made us so----”

“I shall never forgive myself, Glory, though Heaven itself forgives me!”

“If God makes us love each other in spite of every barrier that divides

us----”

“I shall never know another happy hour in this life. Glory--never!”

“Then why should we struggle? It is our fate and we can not conquer it.

You can't give up your life, John, and I can't give up mine; but our

hearts are one.”

Her voice sang like music in his ears, and something in his aching heart

was saying: “What are the laws we make for ourselves compared to the

laws God makes for us?” Suddenly he felt something warm. It was Glory's

breath on his hand. A fragrance like incense seemed to envelop him. He

gasped as if suffocating, and sat down on the sofa.

“You are wrong, dear, if you think I care for the man you speak of. He

has been very good to me and helped me in my career, but he is nothing

to me--nothing whatever--But we are such old friends, John? It seems

impossible to remember a time when we were not old chums, you and I!

Sometimes I dream of those dear old days in the 'lil oilan'! Aw, they

were ter'ble--just ter'ble! Do you remember the boat--the \_Gloria\_--do

you remember her?” (He clinched his hands as though to hold on to his

purpose, but it was slipping through his fingers like sand.) “What times

they were! Coming round the castle of a summer evening when the bay and

the sky were like two sheets of silvered glass looking into each other,

and you and I singing 'John Peel'” (in a quavering voice she sang a

bar or two): “'D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay? D'ye ken John

Peel'---Do you remember it, John?”

She was sobbing and laughing by turns. It was her old self, and the

cruel years seemed to roll back. But still he struggled. “What is the

love of the body to the love of the soul?” he told himself.

“You wore flannels then, and I was in a white jersey--like this, see,”

and she snatched up from the mantelpiece the photograph he had been

looking at. “I got up my first act in imitation of it, and sometimes

in the middle of a scene--such a jolly scene, too--my mind goes back to

that sweet old time and I burst out crying.”

He pushed the photograph away. “Why do you remind me of those days?”

he said. “Is it only to make me realize the change in you?” But even at

that moment the wonderful eyes pierced him through and through.

“Am I so much changed, John? Am I? No, no, dear! It is only my hair done

differently. See, see!” and with trembling fingers she tore her hair

from its knot. It fell in clusters over her shoulders and about her

face. He wanted to lay his hand on it, and he turned to her and then

turned away, fighting with himself as with an enemy.

“Or is it this old rag of lace that is so unlike my jersey?

There--there!” she cried, tearing the lace from her neck, and throwing

it on the floor and trampling upon it. “Look at me now, John--look at

me? Am I not the same as ever? Why don't you look?”

She was fighting for her life. He started to his feet and came to

her with his teeth set and his pupils fixed. “This is only the devil

tempting me. Say your prayers, child!”

He grasped her left hand with his right. His grip almost overtaxed

her strength and she felt faint. In an explosion of emotion the insane

frenzy for destroying had come upon him again. He longed to give his

feelings physical expression.

“Say them, say them!” he cried, “God sent me to kill you, Glory!”

A sensation of terror and of triumph came over her at once. She half

closed her eyes and threw her other arm around his neck. “No, but to

love me!--Kiss me, John!”

Then a cry came from him like that of a man flinging himself over a

precipice. He threw his arms about her, and her disordered hair fell

over his face.

IX.

“I thought it was God's voice--it was the devil's!”

John Storm was creeping like a thief through the streets of London

in the dark hours before the dawn. It was a peaceful night after the

thunderstorm of the evening before. A few large stars had come out,

a clear moon, was shining, and the air was quiet after the cries, the

crackling tumult, and all the fury of human throats. There was only the

swift rattling of mail cars running to the Post Office, the heavy

clank of country carts crawling to Covent Garden, the measured tread

of policemen, and the muddled laughter of drunken men and women by the

coffee stands at the street corners. “'Ow's the deluge, myte? Not come

off yet? Well, give us a cup of cawfee on the strength of it.”

It seemed as if eyes looked down on him from the dark sky and pierced

him through and through. His whole life had been an imposture from the

first--his quarrel with his father, his taking Orders, his entering

the monastery and his leaving it, his crusade in Soho, his intention of

following Father Damien, his predictions at Westminster--all, all had

been false, and the expression of a lie! He was a sham, a mockery, a

whited sepulchre, and had grossly sinned against the light and against

God.

But the spiritual disillusion had come at last, and it had revealed him

to himself at an awful depth of self-deception. Thinking in his pride

and arrogance he was the divine messenger, the avenger, the man of God,

he had set out to shed blood like any wretched criminal, any jealous

murderer who was driven along by devilish passion. How the devil had

played with him too!--with him, who was dedicated by the most solemn and

sacred vows! And he had been as stubble before the wind--as chaff that

the storm carrieth away!

With such feelings of poignant anguish he plodded through the echoing

streets. Mechanically he made his way back to Westminster. By the time

he got there the moon and stars had gone and the chill of daybreak was

in the air. He saw and heard nothing, but as he crossed Broad Sanctuary

a line of mounted police trotted past him with their swords clanking.

It was not yet daylight when he knocked at the door of his chambers

under the church.

“Who's there?” came in a fierce whisper.

“Open the door,” he said in a spiritless voice.

The door was opened, and Brother Andrew, with the affectionate whine of

a dog who has been snarling at his master in the dark, said: “Oh, is it

you, Father? I thought you were gone. Did you meet them? They've been

searching for you everywhere all night long.”

He still spoke in whispers, as if some one had been ill. “I can't light

up. They'd be sure to see and perhaps come back. They'll come in the

morning in any case. Oh, it's terrible! Worse than ever now! Haven't you

heard what has happened? Somebody has been killed!”

John was struggling to listen, but everything seemed to be happening a

long way off.

“Well, not killed exactly, but badly hurt, and taken to the hospital.”

It was Charlie Wilkes. He had insulted the name of the Father, and

Pincher, the pawnbroker, had knocked him down. His head had struck

against the curb, and he had been picked up insensible. Then the police

had come and Pincher had been taken off to the police station.

“But it's my mother I'm thinking of,” said Brother Andrew, and he

brushed his sleeve across his eyes. “You must get away at once, Father.

They'll lay everything on you. What's to be done? Let me think! Let me

think! How my head is going round and round! There's a train from Euston

to the north at five in the morning, isn't there? You must catch that.

Don't speak, Father! Don't say you won't.”

“I will go,” said John with a look of utter dejection.

The change that had come over him since the night before startled the

lay brother. “But I suppose you've been out all night. How tired you

look! Can I get you anything?”

John did not answer, and the lay brother brought some brown bread and

coaxed him to eat a little of it. The day was beginning to dawn.

“Now you must go, Father.”

“And you, my lad?”

“Oh, I can take care of myself.”

“Go back to the Brotherhood; take the dog with you----”

“The dog!” Brother Andrew seemed to be about to say something; but he

checked himself, and with a wild look he muttered: “Oh, I know what

\_I'll\_ do. Good-bye!”

“Good-bye!” said John, and then the broken man was back in the streets.

His nervous system had been exhausted by the events of the night, and

when he entered the railway station he could scarcely put one foot

before another. “Looks as if \_he'd\_ had enough,” said somebody behind

him. He found an empty carriage and took his seat in the corner. A kind

of stupor had come over his faculties and he could neither think nor

feel.

Three or four young men and boys were sorting and folding newspapers

at a counter that stood on trestles before the closed-up bookstall.

A placard slipped from the fingers of one of them and fell on to the

floor. John saw his own name in monster letters, and he began to ask

himself what he was doing. Was he running away? It was cowardly, it was

contemptible! And then it was so useless! He might go to the ends of the

earth, yet he could not escape the only enemy it was worth while to fly

from. That enemy was himself.

Suddenly he remembered that he had not taken his ticket, and he got out

of the train. But instead of going to the ticket office he stood aside

and tried to think what he ought to do. Then there was confusion and

noise, people were hurrying past him, somebody was calling to him, and

finally the engine whistled and the smoke rose to the roof. When he came

to himself the train was gone and he was standing on the platform alone.

“But what am I to do?” he asked himself.

It was a lovely summer morning and the streets were empty and quiet.

Little by little they became populous and noisy, and at length he was

walking in a crowd. It was nine o'clock by this time, and he was in the

Whitechapel road, going along with a motley troop of Jews, Polish Jews,

Germans, German Jews, and all the many tribes of Cockneydom. Two costers

behind him were talking and laughing.

“Lor' blesh you, it's jest abart enneff to myke a corpse laugh.”

“Ain't it? An acquyntince uv mine--d'ye know Jow 'Awkins? Him as kep'

the frahd fish shop off of Flower and Dean. Yus? Well, he sold his bit

uv biziness lahst week for a song, thinkin' the world was acomin' to a

end, and this mornin' I meets 'im on the 'Owben Viadeck lookin' as if

'e'd 'ad the smallpox or semthink!”

John Storm had scarcely heard them. He had a strange feeling that

everything was happening hundreds of miles away.

“What am I to do?” he asked himself again. Between twelve and one

o'clock he was back in the city, walking aimlessly on and on. He did not

choose the unfrequented thoroughfares, and when people looked into his

face he thought, “If anybody asks me who I am I'll tell him.” It was

eight hours since he had eaten anything, and he felt weak and faint.

Coming upon a coffee-house, he went in and ordered food. The place was

full of young clerks at their midday meal. Most of them were reading

newspapers which they had folded and propped up on the tables before

them, but two who sat near were talking.

“These predictions of the end of the world are a mania, a monomania,

which recurs at regular intervals of the world's history,” said one. He

was a little man with a turned-up nose.

“But the strange thing is that people go on believing them,” said his

companion.

“That's not strange at all. This big, idiotic, amphorous London has no

sense of humour. See how industriously it has been engaged for the last

month in the noble art of making a fool of itself!” And then he looked

around at John Storm, as if proud of his tall language.

John did not listen. He knew that everybody was talking about him, yet

the matter did not seem to concern him now, but to belong to some other

existence which his soul had had.

At length an idea came to him and he thought he knew what he ought to

do. He ought to go to the Brotherhood and ask to be taken back. But not

as a son this time, only as a servant, to scour and scrub to the end of

his life. There used to be a man to sweep out the church and ring the

church bell--he might be allowed to do menial work like that. He had

proved false to his ideal, he had not been able to resist the lures of

earthly love, but God was merciful. He would not utterly reject him.

His self-abasement was abject, yet several hours had passed before he

attempted to carry out this design. It was the time of Evensong when he

reached the church, and the brothers were singing their last hymn:

Jesus, lover of my soul,

Let me to thy bosom fly.

He stood by the porch and listened. The street was very quiet; hardly

anybody was passing.

Hide me, O my Saviour hide,

Till the storms of life be past.

His heart surged up to his throat, and he could scarcely bear the pain

of it. Yes, yes, yes! Other refuge had he none!

Suddenly a new thought smote him, and he felt like a man roused from

a deep sleep. Glory! He had been thinking only of his own soul and his

soul's salvation, and had forgotten his duty to others. He had his duty

to Glory above all others and lie could not and must not escape from it.

He must take his place by her side, and if that included the abandonment

of his ideals, so be it! He had been proved unworthy of a life of

holiness; he must lower his flag, he must be content to live the life of

a man.

But he could not think what he ought to do next, and when night fell

he was still wandering aimlessly through the streets. He had turned

eastward again, and even in the tumultuous thoroughfares of the Mile End

he could not help seeing that something unusual was going on. People in

drink were rolling about the streets, and shouting and singing as if it

had been a public holiday. “Glad you ain't in kingdom-come to-night, old

gal!” “Well, what do \_you\_ think?”

At twelve o'clock he went into a lodging-house and asked if he could

have a bed. The keeper was in the kitchen talking with two men who were

cooking a herring for their supper, and he looked up at his visitor in

astonishment.

“Can I sleep you, sir? We ain't got no accommodation for gentlemen----”

and then he stopped, looked more attentively, and said:

“Are you from the Settlement, sir?”

John Storm made some inarticulate reply.

“Thort ye might be, sir. We often 'as 'em 'ere sempling the cawfee,

but blessed if they ever wanted to semple a bed afore. Still, if \_you\_

down't mind----”

“It will be better than I deserve, my man. Can you give me a cup of

coffee before I turn in?”

“With pleasure, sir! Set down, sir! Myke yourself at 'ome. Me and my

friends were just talkin' of a gentleman of your cloth, sir--the pore

feller as 'as got into trouble acrost Westminster way.”

“Oh, you were talking of him, were you?”

“Sem 'ere says the biziness pize.”

“It \_must\_ py, or people wouldn't do it,” said the man leaning over the

fire.

“Down't you believe it. That little gime down't py. Cause why? Look at

the bloomin' stoo the feller's in now. If they ketch 'im 'e'll get six

months 'ard.”

“Then what's 'e been doin' it for? I down't see nothink in it if it

down't py.”.

“Cause he believes in it, thet's why!--What do you think, sir?”

“I think the man has come by a just fall,” said John. “God will never

use him again, having brought him to shame.”

“Must hev been a wrong un certingly,” said the man over the fire.

When John Storm awoke in his cubicle next morning he saw his way

clearer. He would deliver himself up to the warrant that was issued for

his arrest, and go through with it to the end. Then he would return to

Glory a free man, and God would find work for him even yet, after this

awful lesson to his presumption and pride.

“That feller as was took ter the awspital is dead,” said somebody in the

kitchen, and then there was the crinkling of a newspaper.

“Is 'e?” said another. “The best thing the Father can do is to 'ook it

then. Cause why? Whether 'e done it or not they'll fix it on ter 'im,

doncher know!”

John's head spun round and round. He remembered what Brother Andrew

had said of Charlie Wilkes, and his heart, so warm a moment ago,

felt benumbed as by frost. Nevertheless, at nine o'clock he was going

westward in the Underground. People looked at him when he stepped into

the carriage. He thought everybody knew him, and that the world was only

playing with him as a cat plays with a mouse. The compartment was full

of young clerks smoking pipes and reading newspapers.

“Most extraordinary!” said one of them. “The fellow has disappeared as

absolutely as if he had been carried up into a cloud.”

“Why extraordinary?” said another in a thin voice. This one was not

smoking, and he had the startled eyes of the enthusiast. “Elijah was

taken up to heaven in the body, wasn't he? And why not Father Storm?”

“What?” cried the first, taking his pipe out of his mouth.

“Some people believe that,” said the thin voice timidly.

“Oh, you want a dose of medicine, you do,” said the first speaker,

shaking out his ash and looking round with a knowing air. The young men

got out in the City; John went on to Westminster Bridge.

It was terrible. Why could he not take advantage of the popular

superstition and disappear indeed, taking Glory with him! But no, no,

no!

Through all the torment of his soul his religion had remained the same,

and now it rose up before him like a pillar of cloud and fire. He would

do as he had intended, whatever the consequences, and if he was charged

with crimes he had not committed, if he was accused of the offences

of his followers, he would make no defence; if need be he would allow

himself to be convicted, and being innocent in this instance God would

accept his punishment as an atonement for his other sins! Glorious

sacrifice! He would make it! He would make it! And Glory herself would

be proud of it some day.

With the glow of this resolution upon him he turned into Scotland Yard

and stepped boldly up to the office. The officer in charge received

him with a deferential bow, but went on talking in a low voice to

an inspector of police who was also standing at the other side of a

counter.

“Strange?” he was saying. “I thought he was seen getting into the train

at Euston.”

“Don't know that he wasn't either, in spite of all he says.”

“Thinking of the dog.”

“Well, the dog, too,” said the inspector, and then seeing John, “Hello!

Who's here?”

The officer stepped up to the counter. “What can I do for you, sir?” he

asked.

John knew that the supreme moment had come, and he felt proud of himself

that his resolution did not waver. Lifting his head, he said in a low

and rapid voice, “I understand that you have a warrant for the arrest of

Father Storm.”

“We \_had\_, sir,” the officer answered.

John looked embarrassed. “What do you mean by that?”

“I mean that Father Storm is now in custody.”

John stared at the man with a feeling of stupefaction. “In custody! Did

you say in custody?”

“Precisely! He has just given himself up.”

John answered impetuously, “But that is impossible.”

“Why impossible, sir? Are you interested in this case?”

A certain quivering moved John's mouth. “I am Father Storm himself.”

The officer was silent for a moment. Then he turned to the inspector

with a pitying smile. “Another of them,” he said significantly. The

psychology of criminals had been an interesting study to this official.

“Wait a minute,” said the inspector, and he went hurriedly through an

inner doorway. The officer asked John some questions about his movements

since yesterday. John answered vaguely in broken and rather bewildering

sentences. Then the inspector returned.

“You are Father Storm?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know of anybody who might wish to personate you?”

“God forbid that any one should do that!”

“Still, there is some one here who says----”

“Let me see him.”

“Come this way quietly,” said the inspector, and John followed him to

the inner room. His pride was all gone, his head was hanging low, and he

was a prey to extraordinary agitation.

A man in a black cassock was sitting at a table making a statement to

another officer with an open book before him. His back was to the door,

but John knew him in a moment. It was Brother Andrew.

“Then why have you given yourself up?” the officer asked, and Brother

Andrew began a rambling and foolish explanation. He had seen it stated

in an evening paper that the Father had been traced to the train at

Euston, and he thought it a pity--a pity that the police--that the

police should waste their time----

“Take care!” said the officer. “You are in a position that should make

you careful of what you say.”

And then the inspector stepped forward, leaving John by the door.

“You still say you are Father Storm?”

“Of course I do,” said Brother Andrew indignantly. “If I was anybody

else, do you think I should come here and give myself up----”

“Then who is this standing behind you?”

Brother Andrew turned and saw John with a start of surprise and a cry

of terror. He seemed hardly able to believe in the reality of what was

before him, and his restless eyeballs rolled fearfully. John tried to

speak, but he could only utter a few inarticulate sounds.

“Well?” said the inspector. And while John stood with head down and

heaving breast, Brother Andrew began to laugh hysterically and to say:

“Don't you know who this is? This is my lay brother! I brought him out

of the Brotherhood six months ago, and he has been with me ever since.”

The officers looked at each other. “Good heavens!” cried Brother Andrew

in an imperious voice, “don't you believe me? You mustn't touch this

man. He has done nothing--nothing at all. He is as tender as a woman and

wouldn't hurt a fly. What's he doing here?”

The officers also were dropping their heads, and the heartrending

voice went on: “Have you arrested him? You'll do very wrong if you

arrest----But perhaps he has given himself up! That would be just like

him. He is devoted to me and would tell you any falsehood if he thought

it would----But you must send him away. Tell him to go back to his old

mother--that's the proper place for him. Good God! do you think I'm

telling you lies?”

There was silence for a moment. “My poor lad, hush, hush!” said John in

a tone full of tenderness and authority. Then he turned to the inspector

with a pitiful smile of triumph. “Are you satisfied?” he asked.

“Quite satisfied, Father,” the officer answered in a broken voice, and

then Brother Andrew began to cry.

X.

When Glory awoke on the morning after the Derby and thought of John she

felt no remorse. A sea of bewildering difficulty lay somewhere ahead,

but she would not look at it. He loved her, she loved him, and nothing

else mattered. If rules and vows stood between them, so much the worse

for such enemies of love.

She was conscious that a subtle change had come over her. She was not

herself any longer, but somebody else as well; not a woman merely, but

in some sort a man; not Glory only, but also John Storm. Oh, delicious

mystery! Oh, joy of joys! His arms seemed to be about her waist still,

and his breath to linger about her neck. With a certain tremor, a

certain thrill, she reached for a hand-glass and looked at herself to

learn if there was any difference in her face that the rest of the world

would see. Yes, her eyes had another lustre, a deeper light, but she

lay back in the cool bed with a smile and a long-drawn sigh. What matter

whatever happened! Gone were the six cruel months in which she had

awakened every morning with a pain at her breast. She was happy, happy,

happy!

The morning sun was streaming across the room when Liza came in with the

tea.

“Did ye see the Farver last night, Miss Gloria?”

“Oh, yes; that was all right, Liza.”

The day's newspaper was lying folded on the tray. She took it up and

opened it, remembering the Derby, and thinking for the first time of

Drake's triumph. But what caught her eye in glaring head-lines was a

different matter: “The Panic Terror--Collapse of the Farce.”

It was a shriek of triumphant derision. The fateful day had come and

gone, yet London stood where it did before. Last night's tide had flowed

and ebbed, and the dwellings of men were not submerged. No earthquake

had swallowed up St. Paul's; no mighty bonfire of the greatest city of

the world had lit up the sky of Europe, and even the thunderstorm which

had broken over London had only laid the dust and left the air more

clear.

“London is to be congratulated on the collapse of this panic, which, so

far as we can hear, has been attended by only one casualty--an assault

in Brown's Square, Westminster, on a young soldier, Charles Wilkes,

of the Wellington Barracks, by two of the frantic army of the

terror-stricken. The injured man was removed to St. Thomas's Hospital,

while his assailants were taken to Rochester Row police station, and we

have only to regret that the clerical panic-maker himself has not yet

shared the fate of his followers. Late last night the authorities,

recovering from their extraordinary supineness, issued a warrant for

his arrest, but up to the time of going to press he had escaped the

vigilance of the police.”

Glory was breathing audibly as she read, and Liza, who was drawing up

the blind, looked back at her with surprise.

“Liza, have you mentioned to anybody that Father Storm was here last

night?”

“Why, no, miss, there ain't nobody stirring yet, and besides----”

“Then don't mention it to a soul. Will you do me that great, great

kindness?”

“Down't ye know I will, mum?” said Liza, with a twinkle of the eye and a

wag of the head.

Glory dressed hurriedly, went down to the drawing-room, and wrote

a letter. It was to Sefton, the manager. “Do not expect me to play

to-night. I don't feel up to it. Sorry to be so troublesome.”

Then Rosa came in with another newspaper in her hand, and, without

saying anything, Glory showed her the letter. Rosa read it and returned

it in silence. They understood each other.

During the next few hours Glory's impatience became feverish, and as

soon as the first of the evening papers appeared she sent out for it.

The panic was subsiding, and the people who had gone to the outskirts

were returning to the city in troops, looking downcast and ashamed. No

news of Father Storm. Inquiry that morning at Scotland Yard elicited the

fact that nothing had yet been heard of him. There was much perplexity

as to where he had spent the previous night.

Glory's face tingled and burned. From hour to hour she sent out for

new editions. The panic itself was now eclipsed by the interest of John

Storm's disappearance. His followers scouted the idea that he had fled

from London. Nevertheless, he had fallen. As a pretender to the gift

of prophecy his career was at an end, and his crazy system of mystical

divinity was the laughing-stock of London.

“It does not surprise us that this second Moses, this mock Messiah, has

broken down. Such men always do, and must collapse, but that the public

should ever have taken seriously a movement which----” and then a

grotesque list of John's followers--one pawnbroker, one waiter, one

“knocker-up,” two or three apprentices, etc.

As she read all this, Glory was at the same time glowing with shame,

trembling with fear, and burning with indignation. She dined with Rosa

alone, and they tried to talk of other matters. The effort was useless.

At last Rosa said:

“I have to follow this thing up for the paper, dear, and I'm going

to-night to see if they hold the usual service in his church.”

“May I go with you?”

“If you wish to, but it will be useless--he won't be there.”

“Why not?”

“The Prime Minister left London last night--I can't help thinking there

is something in that.”

“He will be there, Rosa. He's not the man to run away. I know him,” said

Glory proudly.

The church was crowded, and it was with difficulty they found seats.

John's enemies were present in force--all the owners of vested interests

who had seen their livelihood threatened by the man who declared war

on vice and its upholders. There was a dangerous atmosphere before the

service began, and, notwithstanding her brave faith in him, Glory found

herself praying that John Storm might not come. As the organ played and

the choir and clergy entered the excitement was intense, and some of

the congregation got on to their seats in their eagerness to see if the

Father was there. He was not there. The black cassock and biretta in

which he had lately preached were nowhere to be seen, and a murmur of

disappointment passed over friends and enemies alike.

Then came a disgraceful spectacle. A man with a bloated face and a

bandage about his forehead rose in his place and cried, “No popery,

boys!” Straightaway the service, which was being conducted by two of

the clerical brothers from the Brotherhood, was interrupted by hissing,

whistling, shouting, yelling, and whooping indescribable. Songs were

roared out during the lessons, and cushions, cassocks, and prayer-books

were flung at the altar and its furniture. The terrified choir boys fled

downstairs to their own quarters, and the clergy were driven out of the

church.

John's own people stole away in terror and shame, but Glory leaped to

her feet as if to fling herself on the cowardly rabble. Her voice was

lost in the tumult, and Rosa drew her out into the street.

“Is there no law in the land to prevent brawling like this?” she cried,

but the police paid no heed to her.

Then the congregation, which had broken up, came rushing out of the

church and round to the door leading to the chambers beneath it.

“They've found him,” thought Glory, pressing her hand over her heart.

But no, it was another matter. Immediately afterward there rose over the

babel of human voices the deep music of the bloodhound in full cry. The

crowd shrieked with fear and delight, then surged and parted, and the

dog came running through with its stern up, its head down, its forehead

wrinkled, and the long drapery of its ears and flews hanging in folds

about its face. In a moment it was gone, its mellow note was dying away

in the neighbouring streets, and a gang of ruffians were racing after

it. “That'll find the feller if he's in London!” somebody shouted; it

was the man with the bandaged forehead--and there were yells of fiendish

laughter.

Glory's head was going round, and she was holding on to Rosa's arm with

a convulsive grasp.

“The cowards!” she cried. “To use that poor creature's devotion to

its master for their own inhuman ends--it's cowardly, it's brutal,

it's----Oh, oh, oh!”

“Come, dear,” said Rosa, and she dragged Glory away.

They went back through Broad Sanctuary. Neither spoke, but both were

thinking: “He has gone to the monastery. He intends to stay there until

the storm is over.” At Westminster Bridge they parted. “I have somewhere

to go,” said Rosa, turning down to the Underground. “She is going to

Bishopsgate Street,” thought Glory, and they separated with constraint.

Returning to Clement's Inn, Glory found a letter from Drake:

“Dear Glory: How can I apologize to you for nay detestable behaviour of

last night? The memory of what passed has taken all the joy out of

the success upon which everybody is congratulating me. I have tried

to persuade myself that you would make allowances for the day and the

circumstances and my natural excitement. But your life has been so

blameless that it fills me with anguish and horror to think how I

exposed you to misrepresentation by allowing you to go to that place,

and by behaving to you as I did when you were there. Thank God, things

went no farther, and some blessed power prevented me from carrying out

my threat to follow you. Believe me, you shall see no more of men like

Lord Robert Ure and women like his associates. I despise them from my

heart, and wonder how I can have tolerated them so long. Do let me

beg the favour of a line consenting to allow me to call and ask your

forgiveness. Yours most humbly,

“F. H. N. Drake.”

Glory slept badly that night, and as soon as Liza was stirring she rang

for the newspaper.

“Didn't ye 'ear the dorg, mum?” said Liza.

“What dog?”

“The Farver's dorg. It was scratching at the front dawer afore I was up

this morning. 'It's the milk,' sez I. But the minute I opened the dawer

up it came ter the drawerin' room and went snuffling rahnd everywhere.”

“Where is it now?”

“Gorn, mum.”

“Did anybody else see it? No? You say no? You're sure? Then say nothing

about it, Liza--nothing whatever--that's a good girl.”

The newspaper was full of the mysterious disappearance. Not a trace of

the Father had yet been found. The idea had been started that he

had gone into seclusion at the Anglican monastery with which he was

associated, but on inquiry at Bishopsgate Street it was found that

nothing had been seen of him there. Since yesterday the whole of London

had been scoured by the police, but not one fact had been brought to

light to make clearer the mystery of his going away. With the most

noticeable face and habit in London he had evaded scrutiny and gone into

a retirement which baffled discovery. No master of the stage art could

have devised a more sensational disappearance. He had vanished as though

whirled to heaven in a cloud, and that was literally what the more

fanatical of his followers believed to have been his fate. Among these

persons there were wild-eyed hangers-on telling of a flight upward on

a fiery chariot, as well as a predicted disappearance and reappearance

after three days. Such were the stories being gulped down by the

thousands who still clung with an indefinable fascination to the memory

of the charlatan. Meantime the soldier Wilkes had died of his injuries,

and the coroner's inquiry was to be opened that day.

“Unfeeling brutes! The bloodhound is an angel of mercy compared to

them,” thought Glory, but the worst sting was in the thought that John

had fled out of fear and was now in hiding somewhere.

Toward noon the newsboys were rushing through the Inn, crying their

papers against all regulations, and at the same moment Rosa came in to

say that John Storm had surrendered.

“I knew it!” cried Glory; “I knew he would!”

Then Rosa told her of Brother Andrew's attempt to personate his master,

and with what pitiful circumstances it had ended.

“Only a lay brother, you say, Rosa?”

“Yes, a poor half-witted soul apparently--must have been, to imagine

that a subterfuge like that would succeed in London.”

Glory's eyes were gleaming. “Rosa,” she said, “I would rather have done

what he did than play the greatest part in the world.”

She wished to be present at the trial, and proposed to Rosa that she

should go with her.

“But dare you, my child? Considering your old friendship, dare you see

him----”

“Dare I?” said Glory. “Dare I stand in the dock by his side!”

But when she got to Bow Street and saw the crowds in the court, the line

of distinguished persons of both sexes allowed to sit on the bench, the

army of reporters and newspaper artists, and all the mass of smiling and

eager faces, without ruth or pity, gathered together as for a show, her

heart sickened and she crept out of the place before the prisoner was

brought into the dock.

Walking to and fro in the corridor, she waited the result of the trial.

It was not a long one. The charge was that of causing people unlawfully

to assemble to the danger of the public peace. There was no defence. A

man with a bandaged forehead was the first of the witnesses. He was

a publican, who lived in Brown's Square and had been a friend of the

soldier Wilkes. The injury to his forehead was the result of a blow from

a stick given by the prisoner's lay brother on the night of the Derby,

when, with the help of the deceased, he had attempted to liberate the

bloodhound. He had much to say of the Father's sermons, his speeches,

his predictions, his slanders, and his disloyalty. Other witnesses were

Pincher and Hawkins. They were in a state of abject fear at the fate

hanging over their own heads, and tried to save their own skins by

laying the blame of their own conduct upon the Father. The last witness

was Brother Andrew, and he broke down utterly. Within an hour Rosa came

out to say that John Storm had been committed for trial. Bail was not

asked for, and the prisoner, who had not uttered a word from first to

last, had been taken back to the cells.

Glory hurried home and shut herself in her room. The newsboys in the

street were shouting, “Father Storm in the dock!” and filling the air

with their cries. She covered her ears with her hands, and made noises

in her throat that she might not hear.

John Storm's career was at an end. It was all her fault. If she had

yielded to his desire to leave London, or if she had joined him there,

how different everything must have been! But she had broken in upon

his life and wrecked it. She had sinned against him who had given her

everything that one human soul can give another.

Liza came up with, red eyes, bringing the evening papers and a letter.

The papers contained long reports of the trial and short editorials

reproving the public for its interest in such a poor impostor. Some of

them contained sketches of the prisoner and of the distinguished persons

recognised in court. “The stage was represented by----,” and then a

caricature of herself.

The letter was from Aunt Rachel:

“My Dear, My Best-Beloved Glory: I know how much your kind \_heart\_ will

be lowered by the painful tidings I have to write to you. Lord Storm

died on Monday and was buried to-day. To the last he declared he would

never consent to make peace with John, and he has left nothing to him

but his title, so that our dear friend is now a nobleman without an

estate. Everybody about the old lord at the end was unanimous in favour

of his son, but he would not listen to them, and the scene at the

deathbed was shocking. It seems that with his dying breath and many

bursts of laughter he read aloud his will, which ordered that his

effects should be sold and the proceeds given to some society for the

protection of the Established Church. And then he told old Chaise that

as soon as he was gone a coffin was to be got and he was to be screwed

down at once, 'for,' said he, 'my son would not come to see me \_living\_,

and he sha'n't stand grinning at me \_dead\_.' The funeral was at

Kirkpatrick this morning, and \_few\_ came to see the last of one who had

left none to mourn him; but just as the remains were being deposited in

the dark vault a carriage drove up and an elderly gentleman got out. No

one knew him, and he stood and looked down with his impassive face while

the service was being read, and then, without speaking to any one, he

got back into the carriage and drove away. The \_minute\_ he was gone I

told Anna he was somebody of consequence; and then everybody said

it must be Lord Storm's brother and no less a person than the Prime

Minister of England. It seems that the sale is to come off immediately,

so that Knockaloe will be a waste, as if sown with salt; and, so far as

this island is concerned, all trace of the Storms, father and son,

will be gone for good. I ever knew it must end thus! But I will more

particularly tell you everything when we meet again, which I hope may be

\_soon\_. Meantime I need not say how much I am, my dear child, your ever

fond--nay, more than fond--\_devoted\_ auntie.

“Rachel.”

XI.

“Yes,” said Rosa, across the dinner table, “the sudden fall of a man who

has filled a large space in the public eye is always pitiful. It is like

the fall of a great tree in the forest. One never realized how big it

was until it was down.”

“It's awful! awful!” said Glory.

“Whether one liked the man or not, such a downfall seems hard to

reconcile with the idea of a beneficent Providence.”

“Hard? Impossible, you mean!”

“Glory!”

“Oh, I'm only a pagan, and always have been; but I can't believe in a

God that does nothing--I won't, I won't!”

“Still, we can't see the end yet. After the cross the resurrection, as

the Church folks say; and who knows but out of all this----”

“What's to become of his church?”

“Oh, there'll be people enough to see to that, and if the dear

Archdeacon--but he's busy with Mrs. Macrae, bless him! She has gone to

wreck at last, and is living hidden away in a farmhouse somewhere, that

she may drink herself to death without detection and interruption. But

the Archdeacon and Lord Robert have found her out, and there they are

hovering round like two vultures, waiting for the end.”

“And his orphanage?”

“Ah, that's another pair of shoes altogether, dear. Being an institution

that asks for an income instead of giving one, there'll be nobody too

keen to take it over.”

“O God! O God! What a world it is!” cried Glory.

After dinner she went off to Westminster in search of the orphanage.

It stood on a corner of the church square. The door was closed, and the

windows of the ground floor were shuttered. With difficulty she obtained

admission and access to the person in charge. This was an elderly lady

in a black silk dress and with snow-white hair.

“I'm no the matron, miss,” she said. “The matron's gone--fled awa' like

a' the lave o' the grand Sisters, thinking sure the mob would mak' this

house their next point of attack.”

“Then I know whom \_you\_ are--you're Mrs. Callender,” said Glory.

“Jane Callender I am, young leddy. And who may ye be yersel'?”

“I'm a friend of John's, and I want to know if there's anything----”

“You're no the lassie hersel', are ye? You are, though; I see fine you

are! Come, kiss me--again, lassie! Oh, dear! oh, dear! And to think we

must be meeting same as this! For a' the world it's like clasping hands

ower the puir laddie's grave!”

They cried in each other's arms, and then both felt better.

“And the children,” said Glory, “who's looking after them if the matron

and Sisters are gone?”

“Just me and the puir bairns theirsel's, and the wee maid of all wark

that opened the door til ye. But come your ways and look at them.”

The dormitory was in an upper story. Mrs. Gallender had opened the door

softly, and Glory stepped into a large dark room in which fifty children

lay asleep. Their breathing was all that could be heard, and it seemed

to fill the air as with the rustle of a gentle breeze. But it was hard

to look upon them and to think of their only earthly father in his cell.

With full hearts and dry throats the two women returned to a room below.

By this time the square, which before had only shown people standing

in doorways and lounging at street corners, was crowded with a noisy

rabble. They were shouting out indecent jokes about “monks,” “his

reverend lordship,” and “doctors of diwinity”; and a small gang of them

had got a rope which they were trying to throw as a lasso round a figure

of the Virgin in a niche over the porch. The figure came down at length

amid shrieks of delight, and when the police charged the mob they flung

stones which broke the church windows.

Again Glory felt an impulse to throw herself on the cowardly rabble,

but she only crouched at the window by the side of Mrs. Callender, and

looked down at the sea of faces below with their evil eyes and cruel

mouths.

“Oh, what a thing it is to be a woman!” she moaned.

“Aye, lassie, aye, there's mair than one of us has felt that,” said Mrs.

Callender.

Glory did not speak again as long as they knelt by the window, holding

each other's hands, but the tears that had sprung to her eyes at the

thought of her helplessness dried up of themselves, and in their place

came the light of a great resolution. She knew that her hour had struck

at last--that this was the beginning of the end.

The theatres were emptying and carriages were rolling away from them as

she drove home by way of the Strand. She saw her name on omnibuses and

her picture on boardings, and felt a sharp pang. But she was in a state

of feverish excitement and the pain was gone in a moment.

Another letter from Drake was waiting for her at the Inn:

“I feel, my dear Glory, that you are entirely justified in your silence,

but to show you how deep is my regret, I am about to put it in my power

to atone, as far as I can, for the conduct which has quite properly

troubled and hurt you. You will put me under an eternal obligation to

you if you will consent to become my wife. We should be friends as

well as lovers, Glory, and in an age distinguished for brilliant and

beautiful women, it would be the crown of my honour that my wife was

above all a woman of genius. Nothing should disturb the development of

your gifts, and if any social claims conflicted with them, they, and

not you, would suffer. For the rest I can bring you nothing, dear,

but--thanks to the good father who was born before me--such advantages

as belong to wealth. But so far as these go there is no pleasure you

need deny yourself, and if your sympathies are set on any good work for

humanity there is no opportunity you may not command. With this I can

only offer you the love and devotion of my whole heart and soul, which

now wait in fear and pain for your reply.”

Glory read this letter with a certain quivering of the eyelids, but she

put it away without a qualm. Nevertheless, the letter was hard to reply

to, and she made many attempts without satisfying herself in the end.

There was a note of falsehood in all of them, and she felt troubled and

ashamed:

“When I remember how good you have been to me from the first, I could

cry to think of the answer I must give you. But I can't help it--oh, I

can't, I can't! Don't think me ungrateful, and don't suppose I am

angry or in any way hurt or offended, but to do what you desire is

impossible--quite, quite impossible. Oh, if you only knew what it is

to deny myself the future you offer me, to turn my back on the gladness

with which life has come to me, to strip all these roses from my hair,

you would believe it must be a far, far higher call than to worldly rank

and greatness that I am listening to at last. And it is. A woman may

trifle with her heart, while the one she loves is well and happy

or great and prosperous, but when he is down and the cruel world is

trampling on him, there can be no paltering with it any longer---Yes, I

must go to \_him\_ if I go to anybody. Besides, you can do without me and

he can not. You have all the world, and he has nothing but me. If you

were a woman you would understand all this, but you are loyal and brave

and true, and when I look at your letter and remember how often you have

spoken up for a fallen man my heart quivers and my eyes grow dim, and I

know what it means to be an English gentleman.”

After writing this letter she went up to her bedroom and busied herself

about for an hour, making up parcels of her clothing and jewellery, and

labelling them with envelopes bearing names. The plainer costumes she

addressed to Aunt Anna, a fur-lined coat to Aunt Rachel, an opera cloak

to Rosa, and a quantity of underclothing to Liza. All her jewels, and

nearly all the silver trinkets from the dressing-table, were made up

in a parcel by themselves and addressed back to the giver--Sir Francis

Drake.

The clock of St. Clement's Danes was chiming midnight when this was

done, and she stood a moment and asked herself, “Is there anything

else?” Then there was a slippered foot on the stair, and somebody

knocked.

“It's only me, miss, and can I do anythink for ye?”

Glory opened the door and found Liza there, half dressed and looking as

if she had been crying.

“Nothing, Liza, nothing, thank you! But why aren't you in bed?”

“I can't sleep a blessed wink to-night somehow, miss,” said Liza. And

then, looking into the room, “But are ye goin' away somewhere. Miss

Gloria?”

“Yes, perhaps.”

“Thort ye was--I could hear ye downstairs.”

“Not far, though--just a little journey--go back to bed now.

Good-night.”

“Good-night, miss,” and Liza went down with lingering footsteps.

Half an hour or so afterward Glory heard Rosa come in from the office

and pass up to her bedroom on the floor above. “Dear, unselfish soul!”

she thought, and then she sat down to write another letter:

“Darling Rosa: I am going to leave you, but there is no help for it--I

must. Don't you remember I used to say if I should ever find a man who

was willing to sacrifice all the world for me I would leave everything

and follow him? I have found him, dear, and he has not only sacrificed

all the world for my sake, but trampled on Heaven itself. I can't go to

him now--would to Heaven I could!--but neither can I go on living this

present life any longer. So I am turning my back on it all, exactly as I

said I would--the world, so sweet and so cruel; art, so beautiful and so

difficult, and even 'the clapping of hands in a theatre.' You will say

I am a donkey, and so I may be, but it must be a descendant of Balaam's

old friend, who knew the way she ought to go.

“Forgive me that I am going without saying good-bye. It is enough to

have to resist the battering of one's own doubts without encountering

your dear solicitations. And forgive me that I am not telling you where

I am going and what is to become of me. You will be questioned and

examined, and I feel as much frightened of being overtaken by my old

existence as the poor simpleton who took it into his head that he was a

grain of barley, and as often as he saw a cock or a hen he ran for his

life. Thank you, dearest, for allowing me to share your sweet rooms

with you, for the bright hours we have spent in them, and all the merry

jaunts we have had together. There will be fewer creature comforts where

I am going to, and my feet will not be so quick to do evil, which will

at least be a saving of shoe-leather.

“Good-bye, old girl--loyal, unselfish, devoted friend! God will reward

you yet, and a good man who has been chasing a Will-o'-the-wisp will

open his eyes to see that all the time the star of the morning has been

by his side. Tomorrow, when I leave the house, I know I shall want to

run up and kiss you as you lie asleep, but I mustn't do that--the little

druggeted stairs to your room would be like the road to another but

not a better place, which is also paved with good intentions. What a

scatter-brain I am! My heart is breaking, too, with all this severing of

my poor little riven cords. Your foolish old chummie (the last of her),

“Glory.”

Next morning, almost as soon as it was light, she rose and drew a little

tin box from under the bed. It was the box that had brought all her

belongings to London when she first came from her island home. Out of

this box she took a simple gray costume--the costume she had bought for

outdoor wear when a nurse at the hospital. Putting it on, she looked at

herself in the glass. The plain gray figure, so unlike what she had been

the night before, sent a little stab to her heart, and she sighed.

“But this is Glory, after all,” she thought. “This is the granddaughter

of my grandfather, the daughter of my father, and not the visionary

woman who has been masquerading in London so long.” But the conceit did

not comfort her very much, and scalding tear-drops began to fall.

Tying up some other clothing into a little bundle, she opened the door

and listened. There was no noise in the house, and she crept downstairs

with a light tread. At the drawing-room she paused and took one last

look round at the place where she had spent so many exciting hours,

and lived through such various phases of life. While she stood on the

threshold there was a sound of heavy breathing. It came from the pug,

which lay coiled up on the sofa, asleep. Reproaching herself with having

forgotten the little thing, she took it up in her arms and hushed it

when it awoke and began to whine. Then she crept down to the front door,

opened it softly, passed out, and closed it after her. There was a click

of the lock in the silent gardens, and then no sound anywhere but the

chirrup of the sparrows in the eaves.

The sun was beginning to climb over the cool and quiet streets as she

went along, and some cabmen at the stand looked over at the woman in

nurse's dress, with a little bundle in one hand and the dog under the

other arm. “Been to a death, p'r'aps. Some uv these nurses, they've

tender 'earts, bless 'em, and when I was in the 'awspital----” But she

turned her head and hurried on, and the voice was lost in the empty air.

As she dipped into the slums of Westminster the sun gleamed on her wet

face, and a group of noisy, happy girls, going to their work in the jam

factories of Soho, came toward her laughing.

The girls looked at the Sister as she passed; their tongues stopped, and

there was a hush.

XII.

John Storm's enemies had succeeded. He was committed for sedition, and

there was the probability that when brought up again he would be charged

with complicity in manslaughter. Throughout the proceedings at the

police court he maintained a calm and dignified silence. Supported by an

exalted faith, he regarded even death with composure. When the trial was

over and the policeman who stood at the back of the dock tapped him on

the arm, he started like a man whose mind had been occupied by other

issues.

“Eh?”

“Come,” said the policeman, and he was taken back to the cells.

Next day he was removed to Holloway, and there he observed the same calm

and silent attitude. His bearing touched and impressed the authorities,

and they tried by various small kindnesses to make his imprisonment

easy. He encouraged them but little.

On the second morning an officer came to his cell and said, “Perhaps you

would care to look at the newspaper, Father?”

“Thank you, no,” he answered. “The newspapers were never much to me even

when I was living in the world--they can not be necessary now that I am

going out of it.”

“Oh, come, you exaggerate your danger. Besides, now that the papers

contain so much about yourself----”

“That is a reason why I should not see them.”

“Well, to tell you the truth, Father, this morning's paper has something

about somebody else, and that was why I brought it.”

“Eh?”

“Somebody near to you--very near and---- But I'll leave it with

you----Nothing to complain of this morning--no?”

But John Storm was already deep in the columns of the newspaper. He

found the news intended for him. It was the death of his father. The

paragraph was cruel and merciless. “Thus the unhappy man who was brought

up at Bow Street two days ago is now a peer in his own right and the

immediate heir to an earldom.”

The moment was a bitter and terrible one. Memories of past years swept

over him--half-forgotten incidents of his boyhood when his father was

his only friend and he walked with his hand in his--memories of his

father's love for him, his hopes, his aims, his ambitions, and all the

vast ado of his poor delusive dreams. And then came thoughts of the

broken old man dying alone, and of himself in his prison cell. It had

been a strangely familiar thought to him of late that if he left London

at seven in the morning he could speak to his father at seven the same

night. And now his father was gone, the last opportunity was lost, and

he could speak to him no more.

But he tried to conquer the call of blood which he had put aside so

long, and to set over against it the claims of his exalted mission and

the spirit of the teaching of Christ. What had Christ said? “Call no man

your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven!”

“Yes,” he thought, “that's it--'for one is your Father which is in

heaven.'”

Then he took up the newspaper again, thinking to read with a calmer

mind the report of his father's death and burial, but his eye fell on a

different matter.

“ANOTHER MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.--Hardly has the public mind recovered

from the perplexity attending the disappearance of a well-known

clergyman from Westminster, when the news comes of a no less mysterious

disappearance of a popular actress from a West-End theatre.”

It was Glory!

“Although a recent acquisition to the stage and the latest English

actress to come into her heritage of fame, she was already a universal

favourite, and her sudden and unaccountable disappearance is a shock

as well as a surprise. To the disappointment of the public she had not

played her part for nearly a week, having excused herself on the ground

of indisposition, but there was apparently nothing in the state of her

health to give cause for anxiety or to prepare her friends for the step

she has taken. What has become of her appears to be entirely beyond

conjecture, but her colleagues and associates are still hoping for the

hest, though the tone of a letter left behind gives only too much reason

to fear a sad and perhaps fatal sequel.”

When the officer entered the cell again an hour after his first visit,

John Storm was pallid and thin and gray. The sublime faith he had built

up for himself had fallen to ruins, a cloud had hidden the face of the

Father which was in heaven, and the death he had waited for as the crown

of his life seemed to be no better than an abject end to a career that

had failed.

“Cheer up,” said the officer; “I've some good news for you, at all

events.”

The prisoner smiled sadly and shook his head.

“Bail was offered and accepted at Bow Street this morning, and you will

be at liberty to leave us to-day.”

“When?” said John, and his manner changed immediately.

“Well, not just yet, you know.”

“For the love of God, sir, let me go at once! I have something to

do-somebody to look for and find.”

“Still, for your own security, Father----”

“But why?”

“Then you don't know that the mob sent a dog out in search of you 2”

“No, I didn't know that; but if all the dogs of Christendom----”

“There are worse dogs waiting for you than any that go on four legs, you

know.”

“That's nothing, sir, nothing at all; and if bail has been accepted,

surely it is your duty to liberate me at once. I claim--I demand that

you should do so!”

The officer raised his eyes in astonishment. “You surprise me, Father.

After your calmness and patience and submission to authority too!”

John Storm remained silent for a moment, and then he said, with

a touching solemnity: “You must forgive me, sir. You are very

good--everybody is good to me here. Still, I am not afraid, and if you

can let me go----”

The officer left him. It was several hours before he returned. By this

time the long summer day had closed in, and it was quite dark.

“They think you've gone. You can leave now. Come this way.”

At the door of the office some minutes afterward John Storm paused with

the officer's hand in his, and said:

“Perhaps it is needless to ask who is my bail” (he was thinking of Mrs.

Callender), “but if you can tell me----”

“Certainly. It was Sir Francis Drake.”

John Storm bowed gravely and turned away. As he passed out of the yard

his eyes were bent on the ground and his step was slow and feeble.

\* \* \* \* \*

At that moment Drake was on his way to the Corinthian Club. Early in the

afternoon he had seen this letter in the columns of an evening paper:

“The Mysterious Disappearances.--Is it not extraordinary that in

discussing 'the epidemic of mystery' which now fills the air of London

it has apparently never occurred to any one that the two mysterious

disappearances which are the text of so many sermons may be really one

disappearance only, that the 'man of God' and the 'woman of the theatre'

may have acted in collusion, from the same impulse and with the same

expectation, and that the rich and beneficent person who (according to

the latest report) has come to the rescue of the one, and is an active

agent in looking for the other, is in reality the foolish though

well-meaning victim of both?--R. U.”

For three hours Drake had searched for Lord Robert with flame in his

eyes and fury in his looks. Going first to Belgrave Square, he had found

the blinds down and the house shut up. Mrs. Macrae was dead. She had

died at a lodging in the country, alone and unattended. Her wealth had

not been able to buy the devotion of one faithful servant at the end.

She had left nothing to her daughter except a remonstrance against

her behaviour, but she had made Lord Robert her chief heir and sole

executor.

That amiable mourner had returned to London with all possible

despatch as soon as the breath was out of his mother-in-law's body and

arrangements were made for its transit. He was now engaged in relieving

the tension of so much unusual emotion by a round of his nightly

pleasures. Drake had come up with him at last.

The Corinthian Club was unusually gay that night, “Hello there!” came

from every side. The music in the ballroom was louder than ever, and,

judging by the numbers of the dancers, the attraction of “Tra-la-la”

was even greater than before. There was the note of yet more reckless

license everywhere, as if that little world whose life was pleasure had

been under the cloud of a temporary terror and was determined to make

up for it by the wildest folly. The men chaffed and laughed and shouted

comic songs and kicked their legs about; the women drank and giggled.

Lord Robert was in the supper-room with three guests--the “three

graces.” The women were in full evening dress. Betty was wearing the

ring she had taken from Polly “just to remember her by, pore thing,” and

the others were blazing in similar brilliants. The wretched man himself

was half drunk. He had been talking of Father Storm and of his own wife

in a jaunty tone, behind which there was an intensity of hatred.

“But this panic of his, don't you know, was the funniest thing ever

heard of. Going home that night I counted seventeen people on their

knees in the streets--'pon my soul I did! Eleven old women of eighty,

two or three of seventy, and one or two that might be as young as

sixty-nine. Then the epidemic of piety in high life too! Several of our

millionaires gave sixpence apiece to beggars--were seen to do it,

don't you know. One old girl gave up playing baccarat and subscribed to

'Darkest England.' No end of sweet little women confessed their pretty

weaknesses to their husbands, and now that the world is wagging along as

merrily as before, they don't know what the devil they are to do---- But

look here!”

Out of his trousers pockets at either side he tugged a torn and crumpled

assortment of letters and proceeded to tumble them on to the table.

“These are a few of the applications I had from curates-in-charge and

such beauties for the care of the living in Westminster while the other

gentleman lay in jail. It's the Bishop's right to appoint the creature,

don't you know, but they think a patron's recommendation---- Oh, they're

a sweet team! Listen to this: 'May it please your lordship----'”

And then in mock tones, flourishing one hand, the man read aloud amid

the various noises of the place--the pop of champagne bottles and the

rumble of the dancing in the room below--the fulsome letters he had

received from clergymen. The wretched women in their paint and patches

shrieked with laughter.

It was at that moment Drake came up, looking pale and fierce.

“Hello there! Is it you? Sit down and take a glass of fizz.”

“Not at this table,” said Drake. “I prefer to drink with friends.”

Lord Robert's eyes glistened, and he tried to smile.

“Really? Thought I was counted in that distinguished company, don't you

know.”

“So you were, but I've come to see that a friend who is not a friend is

always the worst enemy.”

“What do you mean?”

“What does that mean?” said Drake, throwing the paper on to the table.

“Well, what of it?”

“The initials to that letter are yours, and all the men I meet tell me

that you have written it.”

“They do, do they? Well?”

“I won't ask you if you did or if you didn't.”

“Don't, dear boy.”

“But I'll require you to disown it, publicly and at once.”

“And if I won't--what then?”

“Then I'll tell the public for myself that it's a lie, a cowardly and

contemptible lie, and that the man who wrote it is a cur!”

“Oho! So it's like that, is it?” said Lord Robert, rising to his feet as

if putting himself on guard.

“Yes, it \_is\_ like that, Lord Robert Ure, because the woman who is

slandered in that letter is as innocent as your own wife, and ten

thousand times as pure as those who are your constant company.”

Lord Robert's angular and ugly face glistened with a hateful smile.

“Innocent!” he cried hoarsely, and then he laughed out aloud. “Go on!

It's rippin' to hear you, dear boy! Innocent, by God! Just as innocent

as any other ballet girl who is dragged through the stews of London, and

then picked up at last by the born fool who keeps her for another man.”

“You liar!” cried Drake, and like a flash of light he had shot his fist

across the table and struck the man full in the face. Then laying hold

of the table itself, he swept it away with all that was on it, and

sprang at Lord Robert and took him by the throat.

“Take that back, will you? Take it back!”

“I won't!” cried Lord Robert, writhing and struggling in his grip.

“Then take that--and that--and that--damn you!” cried Drake, showering

blow after blow, and finally flinging the man into the \_débris\_ of what

had fallen from the table with a crash.

The women were screaming by this time and all the house was in alarm.

But Drake went out with long strides and a ferocious face, and no one

attempted to stop him.

XIII.

Returning to St. James's Street, Drake found John Storm waiting in his

rooms. The men had changed a good deal since they last met, and the

faces of both showed suffering.

“Forgive me for this visit,” said Storm. “It was my first duty to call

and thank you for what you've done.”

“That's nothing--nothing at all,” said Drake.

“I had also another object. You'll know what that is.”

Drake bowed his head.

“She is gone, it seems, and there is no trace left of her.”

“None?”

“Then \_you\_ know nothing?”

“Nothing! And you?”

“Nothing whatever!”

Drake bowed his head again. “I knew it was a lie--that she had gone

after you--I never believed that story.”

“Would to God she had!” said Storm fervently, and Drake flinched, but

bore himself bravely. “When did she go?”

“Two days ago, apparently.”

“Has anybody looked for her?”

“\_I\_ have--everywhere--everywhere I can think of. But this London----”

“Yes, yes; I know--I know!”

“For two days I have never rested, and all last night.”

Storm's eyes were watching the twitchings of Drake's face. He had been

sitting uneasily on his chair, and now he rose from it.

“Are you going already?” said Drake.

“Yes,” said Storm. Then in a husky voice he added: “I don't know if we

shall ever meet again, you and I. When death breaks the link that binds

people----”

“For God's sake don't say that!”

“But it \_is\_ so, isn't it?”

“Heaven knows! Certainly the letter she left behind--the letter to

Rosa---- Poor child, she was such a creature of joy--so bright, so

brilliant! And then to think of her---- I was much to blame--I came

between you. But if I had once realized----”

Drake stopped, and the men fixed their eyes on each other for a moment,

and then turned their heads away.

“I'm afraid I've done you a great injustice, sir,” said Storm.

“Me?”

“I thought she was only your toy, your plaything. But perhaps” (his

voice was breaking)--“perhaps you loved her too.”

Drake answered, almost inaudibly, “With all my heart and soul!”

“Then--then we have \_both\_ lost her!”

“Both!”

There was silence for a moment. The hands of the two men met and clasped

and parted.

“I must go,” said Storm, and he moved across the room with a look of

utter weariness.

“But where are you going to?”

“I don't know--anywhere--nowhere--it doesn't matter now.”

“Well----”

“Good-night!”

“Good-night!”

Drake stood at the door below until the slow, uncertain footsteps had

turned the corner of the street and died away.

John Storm was sure now. Overwhelmed by his own disgrace, ashamed of

his downfall, and perhaps with a sense of her own share in it, Glory had

destroyed herself.

Strange contradiction! Much as he had hated Glory's way of life, there

came to him at the moment a deep remorse at the thought that he had been

the means of putting an end to it. And then her gay and happy spirit

clouded by his own disasters! Her good name stained by association with

his evil one! Her pure soul imperilled by his sin and fall!

But it was now very late and he began to ask himself where he was to

sleep. At first he thought of his old quarters under the church, and

then he told himself that Brother Andrew would be gone by this time, and

that everything connected with the parish must be transferred to other

keeping. Going by a hotel in Trafalgar Square he stepped in and asked

for a bed.

“Certainly, sir,” said the clerk, who was polite and deferential.

“Can I have something to eat, too?”

“Coffee-room to the left, sir. Luggage coming, sir?”

“I have no luggage to-night,” he answered, and then he saw that the

clerk looked at him doubtfully.

The coffee-room was empty and only half lit up, for dinner was long

over and the business of the day was done. John was sitting at his meal,

eating his food with his eyes down and hardly conscious of what was

going on around, when he became aware that from time to time people

opened the room door and looked across at him, then whispered together

and passed out. At length the clerk came up to him with awkward manners

and a look of constraint.

“I beg your pardon, sir, but--are you Father Storm?”

John bent his head.

“Then I'm sorry to say we can not accommodate you--we dare not--we must

request you to leave.”

John rose without a word, paid his bill, and left the place.

But where was he to go to? What house would receive him? If one hotel

refused him, all other hotels in London would do the same. Then

he remembered the shelter which he had himself established for the

undeserving poor. The humiliation of that moment was terrible. But no

matter! He would drink the cup of God's anger to the dregs.

The lamp was burning in the clock tower of the Houses of Parliament,

and as John passed by the corner of Palace Yard two Bishops came out in

earnest conversation, and walked on in front of him.

“The State and the Church are as the body and soul,” said one, “and to

separate them would be death to both.”

“Just that,” said the other, “and therefore we must fight for the

Church's temporal possessions as we should contend for her spiritual

rights; and so these Benefice Bills----”

The shelter was at the point of closing, and Jupe was putting out the

lamp over the door as John stepped up to him.

“Who is it?” said Jupe in the dark.

“Don't you know me, Jupe?” said John.

“Father Jawn Storm!” cried the man in a whisper of fear.

“I want shelter for the night, Jupe. Can you put me up anywhere?”

“You, sir?”

The man was staggered and the long rod in his hand shook like a reed.

Then he began to stammer something about the Bishop and the Archdeacon

and his new orders and instructions--how the shelter had been taken over

by other authorities, and he was now----

“But d--- it all!” he said, stopping suddenly, putting his foot down

firmly, and wagging his head to right and left like a man making a brave

resolution, “I'll tyke ye in, sir, and heng it!”

It was the bitterest pill of all, but John swallowed it, and stepped

into the house. As he did so he was partly aware of some tumult in a

neighbouring street, with the screaming of men and women and the barking

of dogs.

The blankets had been served out for the night and the men in the

shelter were clambering up to their bunks. In addition to the main

apartment there was a little room with a glass front which hung like a

cage near to the ceiling at one end and was entered by a circular iron

stair. This was the keeper's own sleeping place, and Jupe was making

it ready for John, while John himself sat waiting with the look of a

crushed and humiliated man, when the tumult in the street came nearer

and at last drew up in front of the house.

“Wot's thet?” the men asked each other, lifting their heads, and Jupe

came down and went to the door. When he returned his face was white, the

sweat hung on his forehead, and a trembling shook his whole body.

“For Gawd's sake, Father, leave the house at onct!” he whispered in

great agitation. “There's a gang outside as'll pull the place dahn if I

keep you.”

There was silence for a moment, save for the shouting outside, and then

John said, with a sigh and a look of resignation, “Very well, let me

out, then,” and he turned to the door.

“Not that wy, sir--this wy,” said Jupe, and at the next moment they were

stepping into a dark and narrow lane at the back. “Turn to the left when

ye get ter the bottom, Father--mind ye turn ter the left.”

But John Storm had scarcely heard him. His heart had failed him at last.

He saw the baseness and ingratitude of the people whom he had spent

himself to relieve and uplift and succour and comfort, and he repented

himself of the hopes and aims and efforts which had come to this

bankruptcy in the end.

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Yes, yes, that was it! It was not this poor vile race merely, this

stupid and ungrateful humanity--it was God! God used one man's

ignorance, and another man's anger, and another man's hatred, and

another man's spite, and worked out his own ends through it all. And God

had rejected him, refused him, turned a deaf ear to his prayer and his

repentance, robbed him of friends, of affection, of love, and cast him

out of the family of man!

Very well! So be it! What should he do? He would go back to prison and

say: “Take me in again--there is no room left for me in the world. I am

alone, and my heart is dead within me!”

He was at the end of the dark lane by this time, and forgetting Jupe's

warning, and seeing a brightly lighted street running off to his right,

he swung round to it and walked boldly along. This was Old Pye Street,

and he had come to the corner at which it opens into Brown's Square when

his absent mind became conscious of the loud baying of a dog. At the

next moment the dog was at his feet, bounding about him with frantic

delight, leaping up to him as if trying to kiss him, and uttering

meanwhile the most tender, the most true, the most pitiful cries of

love.

It was his own dog, the bloodhound Don!

His unworthy thoughts were, chased away at the sight of this one

faithful friend remaining, and he was stooping to fondle the great

creature, to pull at the long drapery of its ears and the pendulous

folds of its glorious forehead, when a short, sharp cry caused him to

lift his head.

“Thet's 'im!” said somebody, and then he was aware that a group of

men with evil faces had gathered round. He knew them in a moment: the

publican with his bandaged head, Sharkey, who had served his time and

been released from prison, and Pincher and Hawkins, who were out on

bail. They had all been drinking. The publican, who carried a stick, was

drunk, and the “knocker-up” was staggering on a crutch.

Then came a hideous scene. The four men began to taunt John Storm, to

take off their hats and bow to him in mock honour. “His Lordship,

I believe '“ said one. “His Reverend Lordship, if you please!” said

another.

“Leave me; for God's sake, leave me!” said John.

But their taunts became more and more menacing. “Wot abart the end uv

the world, Father?” “Didn't ye tell me to sell my bit uv biziness?” “And

didn't ye say you'd cured me? and look at me now!”

“Don't, I tell you, don't!” cried John, and he moved away.

They followed and began to push him. Then he stopped and cried in a loud

voice of struggle and agony: “Do you want to raise the devil in me? Go

home! Go home!”

But they only laughed and renewed their torment. His hat fell off and

he snatched at it to recover it. In doing so his hand struck somebody in

the face. “Strike a cripple, will ye?” said the publican, and he raised

his stick and struck a heavy blow on John's shoulder. At the next moment

the dog had leaped upon the man, and he was shrieking on the ground. The

“knocker-up” lifted his crutch and with the upper end of it he battered

at the dog's brains.

“Stop, man! stop, stop!--Don! Don!”

But the dog held on, and the man with the crutch continued to strike

at it, until Pincher, who had run to the other side of the street, came

back with a clasp knife and plunged it into the dog's neck. Then with

a growl and a whine and a pitiful cry the creature let go its hold and

rolled over, and the publican got on to his feet.

It was the beginning of the end. John Storm looked down at the dog in

its death-throes, and all the devil in his heart came up and mastered

him. There was a shop at the corner of the square, and some heavy chairs

were standing on the pavement. He took up one of these and swung it

round him like a toy, and the men fell on every side.

By this time the street was in commotion, and people were coming from

every court and yard and alley crying:

“A madman!” “Police!” “Lay hold of him!” “He'll kill somebody!” “Down

with him!”

John Storm was also shouting at the top of his voice, when suddenly he

felt a dull, stunning pain, without exactly knowing where. Then he

felt himself moving up, up, up--he was in a train, the train was going

through a tunnel, and the guards were screaming; then it was hot and at

the next moment it was cold, and still he was floating, floating; and

then he saw Glory--he heard her say something--and then he opened his

eyes, and lo! the dark sky was above him, and some women were speaking

in agitated voices over his face.

“Who is it?”

“It's Father Storm. The brutes! The beasts! And the pore dog, too!”

“Oh, dear! Where's the p'lice? What are we goin' to do with 'im, Aggie?”

“Tyke 'im to my room, thet's what.”

Then he heard Big Ben strike twelve, and then---- It was a long, long

journey, and the tunnel seemed to go on and on.

XIV.

Half an hour afterward there came to the door of the Orphanage the

single loud thud that is the knock of the poor. An upper window was

opened, and a tremulous voice from the street below cried, “Glory! Miss

Gloria!”

It was Agatha Jones. Glory hastened downstairs and found the girl in

great agitation. One glance at her face in the candlelight seemed to

tell all.

“You've found him?”

“Yes; he's hurt. He's----”

“Be calm, child; tell me everything,” said Glory, and Aggie delivered

her message.

Since leaving Holloway, Father Storm had been followed and found by

means of the dog. The crowd had set on him and knocked him down and

injured him. He was now lying in Aggie's room. There had been nowhere

else to take him to, for the men had disappeared the moment he was down,

and the women were afraid to take him in. The police had come at last

and they were now gone for the parish doctor. Mrs. Pincher was with the

Father, and the poor dog was dead.

Glory held her hand over her heart while Aggie told her story. “I follow

you,” she said. “Did you tell him I was here? Did he send you to fetch

me?”

“He didn't speak,” said Aggie.

“Is he unconscious?”

“Yes.”

“I'll go with you at once.”

Hurrying across the streets by Glory's side, Aggie apologized for her

room again. “I down't live thet wy now, you know,” she said. “It may

seem strange to you, but while my little boy was alive I couldn't go

into the streets to save my life--I couldn't do it. And when 'is pore

father died lahst week----”

The stone stairs to the tenement house were thronged with women. They

stood huddled together in groups like sheep in a storm. There was not a

man anywhere visible, except a drunken sailor, who was coming down from

an upper story whistling and singing. The women silenced him. Had he no

feelings?

“The doctor's came, Sister,” said a woman standing by Aggie's door. Then

Glory entered the room.

The poor disordered place was lit by a cheap lamp, which threw splashes

of light and left tracts of shadow. John lay on the bed, muttering words

that were inaudible. His coat and waistcoat had been removed, and his

shirt was open at the neck. The high wall of his forehead was marble

white, but his cheeks were red and feverish. One of his arms lay over

the side of the bed and Glory took it up and held it. Her great eyes

were moist, but she did not cry, neither did she speak or move. The

doctor was bathing a wound at the back of the head, and he looked up and

nodded as Glory entered. At the other side of the bed an elderly woman

in a widow's cap was wiping her eyes with her apron.

When the doctor was going away, Glory followed him to the door.

“Is he seriously injured, doctor?”

“Very.” The doctor was a young man--quick, brusque, and emphatic.

“Not dange----”

“Yes. The brutes have done for him, nurse, though you needn't tell his

friends so.”

“Then--there is--no chance--whatever?”

“Not a ghost of a chance. By the way, you might try to find out where

his friends are, and send a line to them. I'll be here in the morning.

Good-night!”

Glory staggered back to the room, with her hand pressed hard over her

heart, and the young doctor, going downstairs two steps at a stride, met

a police sergeant and a reporter coming up. “Cruel business, sir!”

“Yes, but just one of those things that can't easily be brought home to

anybody.” “Sad, though!” “Very sad!”

The short night seemed as if it would never end. When daylight came

the cheerless place was cleared of its refuse--its withered roses, its

cigarette ends and its heaps of left-off clothing. Toward eight o'clock

Glory hurried back to the Orphanage, leaving Aggie and Mrs. Pincher in

charge. John had been muttering the whole night, through, but he had

never once moved and he was still unconscious.

“Good-morning, Sister!”

“Good-morning, children!”

The little faces, fresh and bright from sleep, were waiting for their

breakfast. When the meal was over Glory wrote by express to Mrs.

Callender and to the Father Superior of the Brotherhood, then put on her

bonnet and cloak and turned toward Downing Street.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Prime Minister had held an early Cabinet Council that morning. It

was observed by his colleagues that he looked depressed and preoccupied.

When the business of the day was done he rose to his feet rather feebly

and said:

“My lords and gentlemen, I have long had it in mind to say

something--something of importance--and I feel the impulse to say it

now. We have been doing our best with legislation affecting the Church,

to give due reality and true life to its relation with the State. But

the longer I live the more I feel that that relation is in itself a

false one, injurious and even dangerous to both alike. Never in history,

so far as I know, and certainly never within my own experience, has it

been possible to maintain the union of Church and State without frequent

adultery and corruption. The effort to do so has resulted in

manifest impostures in sacred things, in ceremonies without spiritual

significance, and in gross travesties of the solemn, worship of God.

Speaking of our own Church, I will not disguise my belief that, but for

the good and true men who are always to be found within its pale, it

could not survive the frequent disregard of principles which lie deep

in the theory of Christianity. Its epicureanism, its regard for the

interests of the purse, its tendency to rank the administrator above the

apostle, are weeds that spring up out of the soil of its marriage with

the State. And when I think of the anomalies and inequalities of its

internal government, of its countless poor clergy, and of its lords and

princes, above all when I remember its apostolic pretensions and the

certainty that he who attempts to live within the Church the real life

of the apostles will incur the risk of that martyrdom which it has

always pronounced against innovators, I can not but believe that the

consciences of many Churchmen would be glad to be relieved of a burden

of State temptation which they feel to be hurtful and intolerable--to

render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things

that are God's. Be that as it may, I have now to tell you that feeling

this question to be paramount, yet despairing of dealing with it in the

few years that old age has left to me, I have concluded to resign my

office. It is for some younger statesman to fight this battle of the

separation between the spiritual and the temporal in the interests of

true religion and true civilization. God grant he may be a Christian

man, and God speed and bless him!”

The cabinet broke up with many unwonted expressions of affection for the

old leader, and many requests that he should “think again” over the

step he contemplated. But every one knew that he had set his heart on an

impossible enterprise, and every one felt that behind it lay the

painful impulse of an incident reported at length in the newspapers that

morning.

Left alone in the cabinet room, the Prime Minister drew up his chair

before the empty grate and gave way to tender memories. He thought of

John Storm and the wreck his life had fallen to; of John's mother and

her brave renunciation of love; and finally of himself and his near

retirement. A spasm of the old lust of power came over him, and he saw

himself--to-morrow, next day, next week--delivering up his seals of

office to the Queen, and then--the next day after that--getting up from

this chair for the last time and going out of this room to return to it

no more--his work done, his life ended.

It was at that moment the footman came to say that a young lady in the

dress of a nurse was waiting in the hall. “A messenger from John,” he

thought. And, as he rose to receive her, heavily, wearily, and with

the burden of his years upon him, Glory came into the room with her

quivering face and two great tear-drops standing in her eyes, but

glowing with youth and health and courage.

“Sit down, sit down. But----” looking at her again, “have you been here

before?”

“Never, my lord.”

“I have seen you somewhere.”

“I was an actress once. And I am a friend of John's.”

“Of John's? Then you are----”

“I am Glory.”

“Glory! And so we meet at last, dear lady! But I \_have\_ seen you before.

When he spoke of you, but did not bring you to see me, I took a stolen

glance at the theatre myself----”

“I have left it, my lord.”

“Left it?”

And then she told him what she had done. His old eyes glistened and his

head sank into his breast.

“It wasn't that I came to talk about, my lord, but another and more

painful matter.”

“Can I relieve you of the burden of your message, my child? It has

reached me already. It is in all the morning newspapers.”

“I didn't think of that. Still the doctor told me to----”

“What does the doctor say about him?”

“He says----”

“Yes?”

“He says we are going to lose him.”

“I have sent for a great surgeon--But no doubt it is past help. Poor

boy! It seems only yesterday he came up to London so full of hope and

expectation. I can see him now with his great eyes, sitting in that

chair you occupy, talking of his plans and purposes. Poor John! To think

he should come to this! But these tumultuous souls whose hearts are

battlefields, when the battle is over what can be left but a waste?”

Glory's eyes had dried of themselves and she was looking at the old man

with an expression of pain, but he went on without observing her:

“It is one of the dark riddles of the inscrutable Power which rules over

life that the good man can go under like that, while the evil one lives

and prospers.”

He rose and walked to and fro before the fireplace. “Ah, well! The years

bring me an ever-deepening sadness, an ever-increasing sense of our

impotence to diminish, the infinite sorrow of the world.”

Then he looked down at Glory and said: “But I can hardly forgive him

that he has thrown away so much for so little. And when I think of you,

my child, and of all that might have been, and then of the bad end he

has come to----”

“But I don't call it coming to a bad end, sir,” said Glory in a

quivering voice.

“No? To be torn and buffeted and trampled down in the streets?”

“What of it? He might have died of old age in his bed and yet come to a

worse end than that.”

“True, but still----”

“If that is coming to a bad end I shall have to believe that my father,

who was a missionary, came to a bad end too when he was killed by the

fevers of Africa. Every martyr comes to a bad end if that is a bad

ending. And so does everybody who is brave and true and does good to

humanity and is willing to die for it. But it isn't bad. It's glorious!

I would rather be the daughter of a man who died like that than be the

daughter of an earl, and if I could have been the wife of one who was

torn and trampled down, in the streets by the very people----”

But her face, which had been aflame, broke into tears again and her

voice failed her. The old man could not speak, and there was silence for

a moment. Then she recovered herself and said quietly:

“I came to ask you if you could do something for me.”

“What is it?”

“You may have heard that John wished me to marry him?”

“Would to God you had done so!”

“That was when everybody was praising him.”

“Well?”

“Everybody is abusing him now, and railing at him and insulting him.”

“Well?”

“I want to marry him at last if there is a way--if you think it is

possible and can be managed.”

“But you say he is a dying man!”

“That's why! When he comes to himself he will be thinking as you think,

that his life has been a failure, and I want somebody to be there and

say: 'It isn't, it is only beginning, it is the grain of mustard seed

that \_must\_ die, but it will live in the heart of humanity for ages and

ages to come; and I would rather take up your name, injured and insulted

as it is, than win all the glory the world has in it.'”

The tears were coursing down the old man's face, and for some minutes he

did not attempt to speak. Then he said:

“What you propose is quite possible. It will be a canonical marriage,

but it will take some little time to arrange. I must send across to

Lambeth Palace. Toward evening I can go down to where he lies and take

the license with me. Meantime speak to a clergyman and have everything

in readiness.”

He walked with Glory down the long corridor to the door, and there he

kissed her on the forehead and said:

“I've long known that a woman can be brave, but meeting you this morning

has taught me something else, my child. Time and again I thought John's

love of you was near to madness. He was ready to give up everything

for it--everything! And he was right! Love like yours is the pearl of

pearls, and he who wins it is a prince of princes!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Later the same day, when the Prime Minister was sitting alone in his

room, a member of his cabinet brought him an evening paper containing an

article which was making a deep impression in London. It was understood

to be written by a journalist of Jewish extraction:

“'HIS BLOOD BE ON US AND ON OUR CHILDREN.'

“This prediction has been for eighteen hundred years the expression of

an historical truth. That the whole Jewish nation, and not Pilate or

the rabble of Jerusalem, killed Jesus is a fact which every Jew has been

made to feel down to the present day. But let the Christian nation that

is without sin toward the Founder of Christianity first cast a stone at

the Jews. If it is true, as Jesus himself said, that he who offers a cup

of cold water to the least of his little ones offers it to him, then

it is also true that he who inflicts torture and death on his followers

crucifies him afresh. The unhappy man who has been miserably murdered

in the slums of Westminster was a follower of Jesus if ever there lived

one, and whosoever the actual persons may be who are guilty of his

death, the true culprit is the Christian nation which has inflicted

mockeries and insults on everybody who has dared to stand alone under

the ensign of Christ.

“Let us not be led away by sneers. This man, whatever his errors, his

weaknesses, his self-delusions, and his many human failings, was a

Christian. He was the prophet of woman in relation to humanity as hardly

any one since Jesus has ever been. And he is hounded out of life. Thus,

after nineteen centuries, Christianity presents the same characteristics

of frightful tyranny which disfigured the old Jewish law. 'We have

a law, and by our law he ought to die.' Such is the sentence still

pronounced on reformers in a country where civil and religious laws

are confounded. God grant the other half of that doom may not also come

true--'His blood be on us and on our children!'”

XV.

There was a crowd of people of all sorts outside the tenement house when

Glory returned to Brown's Square, and even the stairs were thronged with

them. “The nurse!” they whispered as Glory appeared, and they made a

way for her. Aggie was on the landing, wiping her eyes and answering the

questions of strangers, being half afraid of the notoriety her poor room

was achieving and half proud of it.

“The laidy 'as came, Miss Gloria, and she sent me to tell you to wyte

'ere for 'er a minute.”

Then putting her head in at the open doer she beckoned and Mrs.

Callender came out.

“Hush! He's coming to. The poor laddie! He's been calling for ye, and

calling and calling. But he thinks ye're in heaven together, seemingly,

so ye must no say anything to shock him. Come your ways in now, and tak'

care, lassie.”

John was still wandering, and the light of another world was in his

eyes, but he was smiling, and he appeared to see.

“Where is she?” he said in the toneless voice of one who talks in his

sleep.

“She's here now. Look! She's close beside ye.”

Glory advanced a step and stood beside the bed, struggling with herself

not to fall upon his breast. He looked at her with a smile, but without

any surprise, and said:

“I knew that you would come to meet me, Glory! How happy you look! We

shall both be happy now.”

Then his eyes wandered about the poor, ill-furnished apartment, and he

said:

“How beautiful it is here! And how lightsome the air is! Look! The

golden gates! And the seven golden candlesticks! And the sea of glass

like unto crystal! And all the innumerable company of the angels!”

Aggie, who had returned to the room, was crying audibly.

“Are you crying. Glory? Foolish child to cry! But I know--I understand!

Put your dear hand in mine, my child, and we will go together to God's

throne and say: 'Father, you must forgive us two. We were but man and

woman, and we could not help but love each other, though it was a fault,

and for one of us it was a sin.' And God will forgive us, because he

made us so, and because God is the God of love.”

Glory could bear no more. “John!” she whispered.

He raised himself on his elbow and held his head aslant, like one who

listens to a sound that comes from a distance.

“John!”

“That's Glory's voice.”

“It \_is\_ Glory, dearest.”'

The serenity in his face gave way to a look of bewilderment.

“But Glory is dead.”

“No, dear, she is alive, and she will never leave you again.”

“What place is this?”

“This is Aggie's room.”

“Aggie?”

“Don't you remember Aggie? One of the poor girls you fought and worked

for.”

“Is it your spirit, Glory?”

“It is myself, dearest, my very, very self.”

Then a great joy came into his eyes, his breast heaved, his breath came

quick, and without a word more he stretched out his arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

“It is Glory! She is alive! My God! O my God!”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Do you forgive me, Glory?”

“Forgive? There is nothing to forgive you for--except loving me too

well.”

“My darling! My darling!”

\* \* \* \* \*

“I thought I was in heaven, Glory, but I am like poor Buckingham--only

half way to it yet. Have I been unconscious?”

Glory nodded her head.

“Long?”

“Since last night.”

“Ah, I remember everything now. I was knocked down in the streets,

wasn't I? The men did it--Pincher, Hawking, and the rest.”

“They shall be punished, John,” said Glory in a quivering voice. “As

sure as heaven's above us and there's law in the land----”

“Aye, aye, laddie” (from somewhere by the door), “mak' yersel' sure o'

that. There'll be never a man o' them but he'll hang for it same as a

polecat on a barn gate.”

But John shook his head. “Poor fellows! They didn't understand. When

they come to see what they've done---- 'Lord, Lord! lay not this sin to

their charge.'”

\* \* \* \* \*

She had wiped away the tears that sprung to her eyes and was sitting by

his side and smiling. Her white teeth were showing, her red lips were

twitching, and her face was full of sunshine. He was holding her hand

and gazing at her constantly as if he could not allow himself to lose

sight of her for a moment.

“But I'm half sorry, for all that, Glory,” he said.

“Sorry?”

“That we are not both in the other world, for there you were my bride, I

remember, and all our pains were over.”

Then her sweet face coloured up to the forehead, and she leaned over the

bed and whispered, “Ask me to be your bride in this one, dearest.”

“I can't! I daren't!”

“Are you thinking of the vows?”

“No!” emphatically. “But--I am a dying man--I know that quite well. And

what right have I----”

She gave a little gay toss of her golden head. “Pooh! Nobody was ever

married because he had a \_right\_ to be exactly.”

“But there is your own profession--your great career.”

She shook her head gravely. “That's all over now.”

“Eh?” reaching up on his elbow.

“When you had gone and nearly everybody was deserting your work, I

thought I should like to take up a part of it.”

“And did you?”

She nodded.

“Blessed be God! Oh, God is very good!” and he lay back and panted.

She laughed nervously. “Well, are you determined to make me ashamed? Am

I to throw myself at your head, sir? Or perhaps you are going to refuse

me, after all.”

“But why should I burden all the years of your life with the name of a

fallen man? I am dying in disgrace, Glory.”

“No, but in honour--great, great honour! These few bad days will be

forgotten soon, dearest--quite, quite forgotten. And in the future time

people will come to me and say--girls, dearest, brave, brave girls, who

are fighting the battle of life like men--they will come and say: 'And

did you know him? Did you really, really know him?' And I will smile

triumphantly and answer them 'Yes, for he loved me, and he is mine and I

am his forever and forever!'”

“It would be beautiful! We could not come together in this world; but to

be united for all eternity on the threshold of the next----”

“There! Say no more about it, for it's all arranged anyhow. The Father

has been persuaded to read the service, and the Prime Minister is

to bring the Archbishop's license, and it's to be to-day--this

evening--and--and I'm not the first woman who has settled everything

herself!”

Then she began to laugh, and he laughed with her, and they laughed

together in spite of his weakness and pain. At the next moment she was

gone like a gleam of sunshine before a cloud, and Mrs. Callender had

come back to the bedside, tying up the strings of her old-fashioned

bonnet.

“She's gold, laddie, that's what yon Glory is--just gold!”

“Aye, tried in the fire and tested,” he replied, and then the back of

his head began to throb fiercely.

Glory had fled out of the room to cry, and Mrs. Callender joined her on

the landing. “I maun awa', lassie. I'd like fine to stop wi' ye, but I

can't. It minds me of the time my Alec left me, and that's forty lang

years the day, but he seems to have been with me ever syne.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Where's Glory?”

“She's coming, Father,” said Aggie, and at the sound of her name Glory

wiped her eyes and returned.

“And was it by my being lost that you came here to Westminster and found

me?”

“Yes, and myself as well.”

“And I thought my life had been wasted! When one thinks of God's designs

one feels humble--humble as the grass at one's feet----But are you sure

you will never regret?”

“Never!”

“Nor look back?”

She tossed her head again. “Call me Mrs. Lot at once, and have done with

it.”

“It's wonderful! What a glorious work is before you, Glory! You'll take

it up where I have left it, and carry it on and on. You are nobler than

I am, and stronger, far stronger, and purer and braver. And haven't I

said all along that what the world wants now is a great woman? I had the

pith of it all, though I saw the true light--but I was not worthy. I

had sinned and fallen, and didn't know my own heart, and was not fit to

enter into the promised land. It is something, nevertheless, that I see

it a long way off. And if I have been taken up to Sinai and heard the

thunders of the everlasting law----”

“Hush, dear! Somebody is coming.”

It was the great surgeon whom the Prime Minister had sent for. He

examined the injuries carefully and gave certain instructions. “Mind you

do this, Sister,” and that, and the other. But Glory could see that he

had no hope. To relieve the pain in the head he wanted to administer

morphia, but John refused to have it.

“I am going into the presence of the King,” he said. “Let me have all my

wits about me.”

While the doctor was there the police sergeant returned with a

magistrate and the reporter. “Sorry to intrude, but hearing your patient

was now conscious----” and then he prepared to take John's deposition.

The reporter opened his notebook, the police magistrate stood at the

foot of the bed, the doctor at one side of it and Glory at the other

side, holding John's hand and quivering.

“Do you know who struck you, sir?”

There was silence for a moment, and then came “Yes.”

“Who was it?”

There was another pause, and then, “Don't ask me.”

“But your own evidence will be most valuable; and, indeed, down to the

present we have no other. Who is it, sir?”

“I can't tell you.”

“But why?”

There was no answer.

“Why not give me the name of the scoundrel who took---- I mean attempted

to take your life?”

Then in a voice that was hardly audible, with his head thrown back and

his eyes on the ceiling, John said, “Father, forgive them, for they know

not what they do!”

It was useless to go further. Glory saw the four men to the door.

“You must keep him quiet,” said the doctor. “Not that anything can save

him, but he is a man of stubborn will.”

And the police magistrate said, “It may be all very fine to forgive your

enemies, but everybody has his duty to society, as well as to himself.”

“Yes, yes,” said Glory, “the world has no room for greater hearts than

its own.”

The police magistrate looked at her in bewilderment. “Just so,” he said,

and disappeared.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Where is she now, my girl?”

“She's 'ere, Father.”

“Hush!” said Glory, coming back to the room. “The doctor says you are

not to talk so much.”

“Then let me look at you, Glory. Sit here--here--and if I should seem to

be suffering you must not mind that, because I am really very happy.”

Just then an organ-man in the street began to play. Glory thought the

music might disturb John, and she was going to send Aggie to stop it.

But his face brightened and he said: “Sing for me, Glory. Let me hear

your voice.”

The organ was playing a “coon song,” and she sang the words of it.

They were simple words, childish words, almost babyish, but full of

tenderness and love. The little black boy could think of nothing but his

Loo-loo. In the night when he was sleeping he awoke and he was weeping,

for he was always, always dreaming of his Loo-loo, his Loo-loo!

When the song was finished they took hands and talked in whispers,

though they were alone in the room now, and nobody could hear them. His

white face was very bright, and her moist eyes were full of merriment.

They grew foolish in their tenderness and played with each other like

little children. There were recollections of their early life in

the little island home, memories of years concentrated into an

hour--humorous stories and touches of mimicry. “'O Lord, open thou our

lips----Where are you, Neilus?' 'Aw, here I am, your riverence, and my

tongue shall shew forth thy praise.'”

All at once John's face saddened and he said, “It's a pity, though!”

“A pity!”

“I suppose the man who carries the flag always gets 'potted,' as they

say. But somebody must carry it.”

Glory felt her tears gathering.

“It's a pity that I have to go before you, Glory.”

She shook her head to keep the tears from flowing, and then answered

gaily: “Oh, that's only as it should be. I want a little while to think

it all out, you know, and then--then I'll pass over to you, just as we

fall asleep at night and pass from day to day.”

\* \* \* \* \*

And then he lay back with a sigh and said, “Well, I have had a happy

end, at all events.”

XVI.

The day had been fine, with a rather fierce sun shining until late in

the afternoon, and long white clouds lying motionless in a deep blue

sky, like celestial sand-banks in a celestial sea. But the tender and

tempered splendour of the evening had come at length, with the sun gone

over the housetops to the northwest, and its solemn afterglow spreading

round, like the wings of angels sweeping down. London was unusually

quiet after the roar and turmoil of the day. The great city lay like a

tired ocean. And like an ocean it seemed to sleep, full of its living as

well as its dead.

In a little square which stands on the fringe of the slums of

Westminster, and has a well-worn church in the middle, and tenement

houses, institutions, and workshops around its sides, a strange crowd

had gathered. It consisted for the greater part of persons who are

generally thought to be beyond the sympathies of life--the “priestesses

of society,” who are the lowest among women. But they stood there for

hours in silence, or walked about with dazed looks, glancing up at the

window of a room on the second story which glittered with the rays of

the dying day. Their friend and champion was near to his death in that

room, and they were waiting for the last news of him.

The Prime Minister had kept his promise. Walking across from Downing

Street his face had been clouded, as if he was thinking out the riddles

of the inscrutable Power which stood to him for God. But when he came to

the square, and looked round at the people, his eyes brightened and he

went on with resignation and even content. The women made way for him

with whispered explanations of who he was, and he walked through them to

the room upstairs.

The room was nearly full already, for the Father Superior had come,

bringing lay brother Andrew along with him, and Aggie was sitting in a

corner, and Mrs. Pincher was moving about, and there was also a stranger

present. And though the little place was so mean and poor, it was full

of soft radiance from the sky, and people walked about in it with a glow

upon their faces.

Glory was by the bedside, standing erect and saying nothing. Her

eyes were glistening with unshed tears, and sometimes her mouth was

twitching. John Storm was conscious and very quiet. Holding Glory's

hand as if he could not part with it, he was looking around with the

expression of the soldier who has done the fearful, perhaps the foolish

and foolhardy thing and scaled the walls of the enemy. He is lying with

the enemy's shot in his breast now, and with death in his eyes, but

he is smiling proudly for all that, because he knows that the army is

coming on. The Superior had brought from the Brotherhood the picture of

the head of Christ in its crown of thorns to hang on the wall at the end

of the bed, and the light from the window made flickering gleams on the

glass, and they were reflected on to his face.

Hardly anybody spoke. As soon as the Prime Minister arrived he took a

paper from his pocket and gave it to the stranger, who glanced at it and

bowed. Then they all gathered about the bed, and the Superior opened a

book which he had carried in his hands, and in solemn accents began to

read:

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God----”

Brother Andrew, who was kneeling at the foot of the bed, whined like

a dog, and some women on the landing, who were peering in at the open

door, whispered among themselves: “It's the Holy Communion! Hush!”

John's power did not fail him. He made his responses in a clear voice,

although his last strength was thrilling along the thread of life. And

Glory, when her turn came, was brave, too. There was just a touch of the

old hoarseness in her glorious voice, a slight quivering of the lids of

her glistening eyes, and then she went on to the end without faltering.

“\_I, GLORY\_--

“I, GLORY--

“--\_take thee, JOHN\_--

“--take thee, JOHN--

“--\_to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward\_--

“....to have and to hold from this day forward--

“--\_for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in

health\_--

“....in sickness and in health--

“--\_to love, cherish, and obey, till death us do part\_--

“....till death us do part----

“....AMEN!”

\* \* \* \* \*

\_AUTHOR'S NOTE\_.

\_It will be seen that in writing this book I have sometimes used

the diaries, letters, memoirs, sermons, and speeches of recognisable

persons, living and dead. Also, it will be seen that I have frequently

employed fact for the purposes of fiction. In doing so, I think I am

true to the principles of art, and I know I am following the precedent

of great writers. But being conscious of the grievous: danger of giving

personal offence, I would wish to say that I have not intended to paint

anybody's portrait, or to describe the life of any known Society or

to indicate the management of any particular Institution. To do any of

these things would be to wrong the theory of fiction as I understand

it, which is not to offer mock history or a substitute for fact, but to

present a thought in the form of a story, with as much realism as the

requirements of idealism will permit. In presenting the thought which

is the motive of “The Christian” my desire has been to depict, however

imperfectly, the types of mind and character, of creed and culture, of

social effort and religious purpose which I think I see in the life of

England and America at the close of the nineteenth century. For such a

task my own observation and reflection could not be enough, and so I am

conscious that in many passages of this book I have often been merely as

the mould through which the metal has passed from the fires kept burning

round about.\_

\_HALL CAINE\_.

\_Greeba Castle, Isle of Man, 1897\_.

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of The Christian, by Hall Caine

\*\*\* END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CHRISTIAN \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* This file should be named 8407-0.txt or 8407-0.zip \*\*\*\*\*

This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:

http://www.gutenberg.org/8/4/0/8407/

Produced by Charles Aldarondo, Tiffany Vergon, Thomas

Berger, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions

will be renamed.

Creating the works from public domain print editions means that no

one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation

(and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without

permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules,

set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to

copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to

protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project

Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you

charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you

do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the

rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose

such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and

research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do

practically ANYTHING with public domain eBooks. Redistribution is

subject to the trademark license, especially commercial

redistribution.

\*\*\* START: FULL LICENSE \*\*\*

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free

distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work

(or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project

Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project

Gutenberg-tm License available with this file or online at

www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to

and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property

(trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all

the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy

all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession.

If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the

terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or

entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be

used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who

agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few

things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See

paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement

and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic

works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation”

or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the

collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an

individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are

located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from

copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative

works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg

are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project

Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by

freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of

this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with

the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by

keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project

Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern

what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in

a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check

the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement

before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or

creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project

Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning

the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United

States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate

access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently

whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the

phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project

Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed,

copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with

almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or

re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included

with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived

from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is

posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied

and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees

or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work

with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the

work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1

through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the

Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or

1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted

with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution

must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional

terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked

to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the

permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm

License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this

work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this

electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without

prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with

active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project

Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary,

compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any

word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or

distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than

“Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version

posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.org),

you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a

copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon

request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other

form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm

License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying,

performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works

unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing

access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided

that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from

the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method

you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is

owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he

has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the

Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments

must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you

prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax

returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and

sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the

address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to

the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies

you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he

does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm

License. You must require such a user to return or

destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium

and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of

Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any

money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the

electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days

of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free

distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set

forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from

both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael

Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the

Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable

effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread

public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm

collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic

works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain

“Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or

corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual

property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a

computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by

your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right

of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project

Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all

liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal

fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT

LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE

PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE

TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE

LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR

INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH

DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a

defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can

receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a

written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you

received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with

your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with

the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a

refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity

providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to

receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy

is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further

opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth

in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER

WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO

WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied

warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages.

If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the

law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be

interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by

the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any

provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the

trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone

providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance

with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production,

promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works,

harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees,

that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do

or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm

work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any

Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of

electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers

including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists

because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from

people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the

assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's

goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will

remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure

and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations.

To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4

and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive

Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit

501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the

state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal

Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification

number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg

Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent

permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S.

Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered

throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809

North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email

contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the

Foundation's web site and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby

Chief Executive and Director

gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg

Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide

spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of

increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be

freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest

array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations

($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt

status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating

charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United

States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a

considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up

with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations

where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To

SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any

particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we

have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition

against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who

approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make

any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from

outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation

methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other

ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations.

To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic

works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm

concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared

with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project

Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed

editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S.

unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily

keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

www.gutenberg.org

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm,

including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary

Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to

subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.